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ABSTRACT

The journalism studies section of the proceedings includes the following 11 papers: "Ethics Interactions between Reporters and Editors: An Assessment of Differences in Ethical Orientations and Their Effects on the Newsroom" (Kevin R. Stoner); "All Brides are Not Beautiful: The Influence of Charlotte Curtis on Women's News Coverage at The New York Times'" (Marilyn Greenwald); "When Newspapers Aren't There: Getting Information in a Media-Poor Environment" (Larry Pearson); "Influence of Chain Ownership on Wire Service Usage" (F. Dennis Hale); "The Effects of Competition on the Content of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch'" (Wayne Wanta and others); "Voices in the News: Newspaper Coverage of Hurricane Hugo and the Loma Prieta Earthquake" (Susanna Hornig and others); "The Government-Media Relationship at the Local Level: Newspaper Coverage of the Recycling Issue in Bloomington, Indiana" (Eddith A. Dashiell); "The Impact of Group Ownership on Organizational Professionalism" (Randal A. Beam); "'Inching Forward': The Metric Conversion Controversy in the Pages of the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune (1970-1980)" (Kartik Pashupati); "Kant, Kohlberg and Race Riots" (Tom Westbrook); and "Trends in Profitability of Daily U.S. Newspapers by Circulation Size 1978-1988" (Marty Tharp and Linda R. Stanley). (MG)

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"Ethics Interactions Between Reporters and Editors: An Assessment of Differences in Ethical Orientations and Their Effect on the Newsroom"

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"Ethics Interactions Between Reporters and Editors: An Assessment of Differences in Ethical Orientations and Their Effect on the Newsroom"

Introduction

Literature search.

Although the subject of the orderly and efficient running of a newsroom has been the subject of numerous studies focusing on reporter satisfaction, (Jeffers, 1989; Johnstone, 1976; Weaver, 1986; Becker, 1987; Tuchman, 1978; Ettema, 1982), and there has been a renewed interest in ethics for several years, little has been written about the role of ethical orientation relative to its effect on newsroom dynamics (Endres, 1985). While the American Society of Newspaper Editors study (Newsroom Ethics..., 1986) considered the orientations of editors regarding the relative weight they attached to various journalistic sins, and Black et al (Black, 1979) have examined the moral development of journalists, several questions remain.

First, do reporters and editors share the same ethical agenda? If not, what are the differences? Finally, if differences do exist, do they affect newsroom functions, particularly with regard to reporter-editor interaction?

A partial answer to the questions comes from Endres (1985), who was able to delineate several influences that journalists believe mold their ethical orientations. It is interesting that while six of his eight influences might be presumed to be brought to the newsroom, the two internal factors - experience and colleagues' behavior - ranked second and third in order of importance, suggesting the importance of newsroom interaction and cognitive growth in journalism. Endres' data support this, showing 64 percent of the respondents said their values and attitudes changed the longer they had been in the business. This contention is supported by the majority who said they consulted colleagues about ethical considerations and the 88 percent reporting the discussions as influential. Cherry (1985) covered some of the same ground, asserting that while journalists are a fairly homogenous group, they nonetheless hold different views about their jobs, and these differences might affect content and newsroom interactions. Her observations are important because they suggest that different personality types (identified by her as promoter, merchant, champion and loner) differ from one another, and that editors tended to be loners who were inner-directed. Reporters, she found, tended to be champions. Cherry points out these differences could affect readers in terms of news selection and newspaper content. Interestingly, given the effect of aging on cognition, she found the age of journalists a significant factor in their preferences for reference groups. Her finding regarding the inner-directed nature of journalists supported the earlier findings of Schwartz (1978).

While the influence of the newsroom has been noted in Endres' survey, researchers still do not know what that influence might prompt reporters and editors to do. As Black and others suggest, this will in many ways be determined by their level of moral development.[1] As he noted, different journalists make different uses of cognitive-shaping interactions. The findings of Endres and Black support the general notion of cognitive development that levels of moral reasoning rise with age, experience and socioeconomic status providing the individual is relatively receptive to novel stimuli (Kohlberg, 1984; Colby, 1983).

Even though editors might reasonably be presumed to be older and have more professional experience than reporters and thus reason differently, there is still no clear-cut empirical evidence to suggest they hold different ethical agendas than do reporters or how such a difference might be made manifest in the newsroom. However, if, as Braman (1988) and Davies (1986) demonstrated, public expectations of media differ from media-generated codes of ethics, and Stoner (1989) found evidence journalism students differ from non-journalism students when asked to solve ethical dilemmas involving vocational issues, it seems reasonable to suggest there would also be disagreement within the newsroom just as there is disagreement without. This would particularly be expected given Endres' identification of early life experiences as pivotal in the decision-making process regarding ethical orientation. Although the constant bickering between reporters in the trade publications[2] supports this suspicion of differing ethical values, there is little academic literature beyond Gordon (1979) or Endres asking reporters what sort of ethical guidance they wish, and what actions they take having obtained that guidance.[3] While not specifically seeking information on ethics, Joseph (1982), found "serious philosophical differences" between reporters and editors and that editors wished reporters to be less involved, not more so, in a range of newsroom decisions. The Joseph study shows reporters wish to be involved in a host of decision-making practices, particularly those relating directly to the performance of their jobs. Given the crucial nature of ethics in the performance of journalism, it seems likely journalists would also prefer more input in the ethical decision-making process. Gaziano (1987), found that reporters want at least limited guidance with regard to the profession, and Gordon (1979) noted support among Chicago journalists for ethics policies.

Similar differences in orientations among journalists in the newsroom and in different types of newsrooms have been found to affect news content and reporter satisfaction (Gaziano, 1987; Sigal, 1973; Bergen, 1987). However, none of the studies noted dealt with the impact of ethical orientations in the newsroom, although Sigal notes the importance of institutional constraints on the news process, and suggests it is even more important than the personal stances of journalists. That newsroom interaction is crucial to the functioning of the journalist is borne out in Burgoon (1982) and in Weaver (1986). Both researchers report that clear directions from superiors and vocational autonomy are the strongest predictors of job satisfaction. Putnam (1983), supports this contention in a broader sense, stressing the importance of clear downward communication, and Lavine (1988), reminds media managers of their communicative duties to subordinates. Editors aware of this importance would be expected to support efforts toward this end, such as the existence of written policies regarding ethics. Meyer (1983) found about 50 percent of newspapers surveyed had codes of ethics. However, other research in Pennsylvania has found most editors overestimate the homogeneity of the newsroom and the effectiveness of their communications with reporters.

Given the apparent desires of journalists to be more involved in the newsroom and to receive at least some guidance in the performance of their jobs, and the importance of such interaction, and given the strong possibility of divergent ethical positions of reporters and editors, the following research hypotheses were articulated:

1 - Editors consider certain employee traits as positive and will report better personal and professional relationships with "best" reporters than with "worst" reporters.

(a) Knowledge of and valuing ethical policies will be traits desired by editors.

(b) Editors will perceive that reporters possessing those desired traits would reason in a similar manner to themselves when confronted with ethical dilemmas.

2 - Using Kohlberg's levels of moral reasoning, reporters employ, or at least aspire, to a different moral reasoning system than that employed by editors.

3- When faced with an ethical dilemma, reporters and editors do not rely on the same types of moral reasoning.

4 - Reporters and editors do not use ethical guidance the same way.

(a) Formal, written policies on ethics will be the most-often-cited type of extant ethical guidance.

(b) Reporters and editors will differ as to importance of an ethics policy.

(c) Reporters and editors will differ as to the extent to which the policy determines their actions.

5 - Reporters and editors will not agree as to what sorts of guidance are appropriate to the newsroom or what management action is appropriate when questions of ethical breaches arise.

Methodology

Sample.

Slightly more than 500 Ohio journalists were surveyed during the winter of 1989 in an attempt to test the hypotheses. Ohio was chosen as a survey site not only for convenience, but because of its large number of daily newspapers (88) and the diversity of circulation of those newspapers. From an identified universe of approximately 1,100 reporters working on daily newspapers in Ohio, a random sample of 300 reporters was drawn using the Kth method. From an identified universe of 212 editors (defined as news-gathering, as opposed to news-processing), a census was attempted. Each daily newspaper in Ohio was contacted and asked to provide a list of its staff members. Of the 88 newspapers, 81 responded. Names of staff members at the non-responding newspapers were obtained by drawing five copies of each newspaper published at various times during the previous year and compiling all bylines. Names of editors were obtained by the same method and from staff listings in the 1988 Editor & Publisher Yearbook. For the purposes of the study, editors were not delineated by level of power or responsibility, however, the research tool asked each editor for his/her job description.

A questionnaire was mailed to each reporter and to each editor (See Appendix I). Three mailings and follow-up telephone requests yielded a response rate of 55 percent (N=165) for the reporters and 66 percent (n=132) for editors. The author had hoped for a higher response rate, but is convinced additional mailings would not yield significantly higher returns.

Research tool.

The research tool (six pages for editors and seven for reporters) listed three journalistic scenarios adapted from general scenarios used by Kohlberg. This technique of adapting

Kohlbergian imperatives such as duty, loyalty and selflessness to a scenario involving a specific discipline has been used in the field of physical education research (Hall, 1986) with some success, although the need for pretesting is obvious. The journalistic scenarios were inspired by several ethics works in journalism (Christians, 1987; Meyer, 1987; Goodwin, 1987; Mauro, 1987; Palmer, 1987; Davies, 1986) and were pretested on professional journalists. Reporters and editors were asked a series of questions about the scenarios designed to ascertain whether they were appealing to the inner-directedness of Schwartz and Cherry or the other-directedness of Endres and other communications researchers. Respondents were also asked what action the newspaper should take toward the reporter in each scenario. Reporters and editors were asked to rate degree of agreement on a ten-point, Likert-type scale with six statements that reflect Kohlberg's levels of moral reasoning[4] and then to select the level most appropriate to their immediate supervisor.

Reporters were then asked a series of questions about relationships with supervisors and to whom they would turn if they had a question about ethics. Editors were asked a series of questions about traits possessed by their best reporter and by their worst. Both groups were then questioned as to what sort of ethics policy their newspaper possessed, whether they had advanced training in ethics and what sorts of ethics issues they believed should be addressed by policy. Reporters and editors were then asked to complete demographic information. With the exception of questions requesting nominal data, such as type of ethics policy, all questions were answered by level of agreement with a 10-point Likert-type scale with 1 indicating strong disagreement with the statement and 10 indicating strong agreement.

Results

Demographics.

Editors.

The mean level of experience of editors was approximately 14 years, with a range of two to 38 and a mode of 10. Slightly more than 87.5 percent of the editors had an undergraduate degree, with 9.4 percent holding a high school diploma and 3.1 percent possessing a master's degree. The size of staff supervised ranged from 1 to 100+, with the mean being slightly less than 15. However, it should be noted that 67.7 percent supervised less than the mean and 32.3 were in charge of four or fewer persons. Given the chance of overrepresentation of reporters from the several large newspapers in the state, editors supervising large numbers of people were probably underrepresented. Indeed, 83.9 percent of the sample worked on newspapers with less than 50,000 circulation. Male respondents far outnumbered females, 75 percent to 25 percent. The mean age of the editors was slightly above 38, with a mode of 32. Ages of respondents ranged from 25 to 63, with generally even dispersion. Sixty-five percent of the editors were 40 or under.

Reporters.

The mean level of experience of reporters was 12 years, with a range from one year to 62. The mode was 10 years, with 58 percent of the reporters having 10 or fewer years of experience and more than 30 percent having fewer than five. Slightly more than 80 percent had an undergraduate degree, with 12.1 possessing a high school diploma. More than 6 percent had a master's degree, almost twice the percentage of editors. The mean staff size was 32.728, with a range from two to 400. More than 57 percent worked with staffs of 20 or fewer. There was generally an even dispersion of respondents, with fewer than 6 percent coming from a staff of more than 100. Sixty-eight percent of the respondents were male, 29.6 female. The mean age was 35, with a mode of 24. The youngest respondent was 23, the oldest 75. Thirty-three percent of the responding reporters described themselves as general assignment journalists, and 21 percent as sports writers. Fewer than 1 percent reported being medical/science reporters. Thirteen percent are feature writers, and 12.2 cover government issues.

Editors' perceptions of reporters.

It is clear editors can distinguish between the traits they value in a reporter and whether the reporter exhibits those traits.

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

While editors reported a significant difference in their personal and professional relationships with their "best" reporter, they made no such distinction with regard to their "worst" reporter, and evidenced some ambivalence about that person both personally and professionally. As the data show, reporters possessing such traits as seeking the editor's opinion on stories, high story counts, aggressiveness and a strong knowledge of newsroom policy whether or not it exists in written form, are "good" reporters. Editors are much more ambivalent about reporters who are willing to draw conclusions in stories, or wish to do analysis-type stories. In general, the editors favor a highly socialized journalist who requires little supervision or interaction with the supervisor, but who nonetheless knows the company line and follows it. Hypothesis 1, 1(a) and 1(b) are supported.

Levels of moral reasoning.

Because of the difficulties in obtaining a match-order, a discussion of how reporters rate editors is beyond the scope of this paper. However, clear differences begin to emerge between the two groups when they are compared as to preferred levels of moral reasoning. It should be noted that such scales measure moral understanding, not necessarily moral action (Kohlberg, 1984) and that persons generally understand a type of moral reasoning at least one step beyond that which they actually employ.

INSERT TABLE TWO ABOUT HERE

Editors were motivated more by the threat of punishment than were reporters, but were also more willing to break a rule if a greater good could be served. Editors also indicated more peer motivation than did reporters. Supervisors rated ethics considerations as more important than did reporters, but by an insignificant margin. Both groups expressed a preferences for levels four and five - the importance of following rules and the possibility of breaking them if a greater good is served. Hypothesis 2 regarding reasoning level is partially supported.

INSERT TABLE THREE ABOUT HERE

As indicated in the table, editors also said they were most apt to have learned of their newsroom's ethics policy from superiors (46.9 percent) or peers (10 percent), while the majority of reporters said they learned of the policy from a manual (62.2 percent) rather than supervisors (31.5 percent) or peers (6.3). Reporters were also slightly more apt than editors to have received structured instruction in ethics (60.7 percent to 54.5 percent).

Responses to ethics scenarios.

Although there were some significant differences with regard to preference of level of moral reasoning, reporters and editors generally took the same actions regarding keeping promises.

INSERT TABLES 4A, 4B AND 4C ABOUT HERE

Reporters and editors also favored a structural rationale when queried as to why they took a specific action, which is consistent with the moral-reasoning levels, in which both groups tended toward rule following or only breaking a rule if a more-important end were served. However, across all three scenarios, reporters and editors differed as to how to handle a potential ethical breach by a reporter. Reporters obviously preferred that management not interfere with their decisions, which is again consistent with earlier studies in which journalists expressed great desire for autonomy. When a journalistic breach was suspected, reporters in two cases were more harsh on their colleagues, and suggested firing the reporter, while editors preferred to counsel the person. Hypothesis 3 is not supported, as reporters and editors tended to take the same actions and to cite the same structural/vocational rationales for their ethics decisions when confronted with specific dilemmas.

Types of Ethics Policies.

Responses from both editors and reporters showed neither group reporting widespread existence of formal, written ethics policies.

INSERT TABLE FIVE ABOUT HERE

Indeed, both groups reported the informal code to be the most prevalent, and 15 percent of the reporters said policy varies by department. Although 10 percent of reporters said their publication had no policy, only 3 percent of editors said this. Hypothesis 4(a) regarding the existence of policies is rejected.

Use of Ethics Policies.

Perhaps the most marked differences with regard to ethical orientation appeared with regard to how journalists use ethics policies.

INSERT TABLE SIX ABOUT HERE

Editors said they understood the policy, while reporters were less sure. Unsure as they were about their own understanding reporters thought their peers know even less than they, and differed significantly with editors as to how well others understood the policy. Editors were also more likely to say they felt they could employ the policy in a specific situation. Editors also perceived ethics codes as being more important to their superiors than did reporters. Editors also thought the newspaper more rigorously enforced ethics policies than did reporters. Finally, reporters were much more apt to rely on their own judgment than were editors. They also said the policy less often determines their actions than it apparently does for editors. Hypotheses 4(b) and 4(c) are supported.

Policy Contents.

As much as reporters and editors diverged on how they reacted to ethical guidelines, they were remarkably similar in their conceptions of what ethics policies should contain.

INSERT TABLE SEVEN ABOUT HERE

Only in an area that reporters might consider not job-related, that of freedom to do volunteer work, did the two groups disagree significantly. Both groups were less than sure whether the policy should contain specified punishments. In this area, it appears that concerns about vocationally related ethics issues are common to both reporter and supervisor. Lying and receiving free tickets and food headed the list of concerns. Social relations among journalists, such as dating, were not considered important by either group. Reference is, however, made back to Tables 4(a,b and c), where clear disagreement between reporters and editors exists as to the proper way to handle a possible breach of ethical behavior. Hypothesis 5 is partially supported. While there is great common ground as to what issues ought to be addressed, there is relatively little agreement as to what type of management intervention is appropriate.

Discussion/Conclusions

It is clear from the findings that reporters are not the homogenous group editors might prefer them to be, and that this heterogeneity extends into the area of ethics and has an impact on the professional and personal relationships of editors and reporters. As editors indicated that an understanding of company ethics policy and a valuing of that policy were extremely important facets of their "best" reporter and not possessed to any significant degree by their "worst" reporter, the relative dearth of formal, written ethics policies seems important, especially as reporters listed manuals as their main source of knowledge in this area. Reporters were less sure than editors they understood the policy and expressed serious concern about their peers' knowledge of company dictum. Further, reporters are less sure than editors they can apply the policy in a specific situation. This might well explain why reporters, who expressed an attraction to rule following and respect for rules, nonetheless report policies having a relatively insignificant impact on their decision making. It is possible that while reporters want autonomy in many areas, they area receiving less guidance than they would like regarding Meyer's "slippery rope" of journalism ethics. They therefore depend upon their own judgment. When this judgment involves one of the vocationally inspired norms of journalism ethics such as not revealing a source, reporters tend to prefer the same actions as editors and for the same reasons. This common valuing is comforting - Christians (1979) called for it a decade ago and Elliot (1988) continues the request - but given the ongoing nature of cognition-shaping interaction with the environment, a presumption of shared norms might be dangerous. If the ever-evolving journalist is to adopt the norms, they presumedly would need to be clearly articulated so the values can be evaluated, inculcated and accepted. The data in this study do not find this mutual understanding of policy. Harkening back to earlier-mentioned studies of management, clear downward communication apparently is not the norm. Editors thought management fairly rigorously enforced ethics policies, reporters were less sure. It is difficult to establish support for a policy that is not always applied. While it is not clear from the data whether reporters are receiving mixed messages regarding ethics, it does seem apparent they are receiving inadequate information. Given the editors' valuing of reporters requiring little supervision or interaction, this seems a false economy on the part of management. With the extremely high value editors placed on ethical considerations and the extremely high value they assigned reporter knowledge of company policy, the data provide a picture of management having failed to achieve agreement with reporters on these crucial issues. Reporters are less-interested in ethical considerations in general and much less knowledgeable as to policy. The fact reporters perceived their editors to be less interested in ethics than they themselves could account for some of the failure to achieve newsroom consensus.

One cannot state conclusively from the limited scenarios presented that reporters are relying on their own judgment and that this judgment conflicts with their editors', three examples hardly fill the arena of ethical consideration. What is clear is that regarding ethics decisions, reporters are willing and even eager to follow rules - whether they concede this openly or not - but the rules are less than clear to them. While this unintentional withholding of information might have the effect of prompting a rise in the level of moral reasoning among reporters, a forced move from level four to level five, such an action is risky from a management perspective. If editors wish their reporters to make decisions they consider ethical, then they must improve the articulation of such policies and their dissemination.

Notes

1.For a detailed description of levels of moral reasoning, the reader is referred to Kohlberg, Lawrence, The Meaning and Measurement of Moral Development, (Worcester, Mass: Clark University Press, 1979) or Hersh, Richard, Paolitto, Diana and Reimer, Joseph, Promoting Moral Growth: From Piaget to Kohlberg, (New York: Longman, 1979). In general, Level One involves fear of punishment; Level Two, anticipation of reward; Level Three, influence of peers; Level Four, the need to follow rules and respect established order; Level Five, the need to obey the rules unless a greater good is served; Level Six, an existential response to life. Note: This level is often dropped from the literature, even by Kohlberg, because so few persons seem to use this type of reasoning.

2.See for example, Aukofer, Fred A., "Ethics Poll Stalled," The Quill, 67:8:9-14.

3. For example, see Sutherland, Frank, "Journalists Groups Arguing Over Need for Strong Ethics Codes," ASNE Bulletin, December 1987: 4-5; Hartman, Barrie, "27 Varieties of Editors Speak on Ethics," ASNE Bulletin, December 1987:6-9; McCulloch, Frank (ed.), Drawing the Line: How 31 Editors Solved Their Toughest Ethical Dilemmas, (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Newspaper Editors Foundation; and _______, "Newsroom Ethics: How Tough is Enforcement," Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 2:1:7-17 (Fall/Winter 1986/87).

4. For an in-depth description of Kohlberg's levels and how they can be recognized and classified, the reader is referred to Kohlberg, Lawrence, "Psychology of Moral Development: The Nature and Validity of Moral Stages," in Essays on Moral Development (Vol. 2), (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1984), pp. xxviii-xxix.

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TABLE ONE

Editors' Relationships With Reporters.

1="Total Disagreement," 10="Total Agreement"

N=132

Issue	Best Reporter		Worst Reporter		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
Personal	7.125+	2.582	5.958	2.136	*
Professional	8.500+	1.650	5.583	2.277	*
Same response	6.772	2.361	4.636	2.232	*
Yrs. Exper.	8.125	7.963	5.542	6.122	*
Seeks help	7.833	1.837	4.541	2.873	*
Needs little help	8.041	1.786	3.833	2.731	*
Knows ethics pol.	8.217	1.861	5.043	2.883	*
Follows Policy	8.913	0.985	5.913	2.731	*
High story count	7.291	2.192	3.375	1.794	*
Does analysis	5.958	2.293	3.375	2.870	*
Doesn't seek advice	5.416	2.575	4.875	3.036	
Draws conclusions	5.166	3.423	4.250	2.935	
Knows policy	8.391	1.358	4.173	2.360	*
Defers to editor	7.083	2.162	6.666	2.234	
Considers editor	5.954	2.702	5.272	2.386	
Aggressive	8.166	1.767	3.375	1.975	*
Picks best angle	8.208	1.597	4.625	1.996	*

*=p<.05,+=t=5.18, p<.000

TABLE TWO

Levels of Moral Reasoning.

Reporter N=165
Editor N=132
*=p<.05
1="Strongly disagree," 10="Strongly agree"

	Editors		Reporters		
Level	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
Punishment	4.500	2.980	2.811	2.305	*
Reward	3.700	2.246	3.803	2.920	
Peers	5.464	2.617	4.039	2.692	*
Follow rules	6.777	2.293	6.524	2.958	
Greater good	7.355	2.563	6.492	3.134	*
Existential	5.548	3.345	5.118	4.610	

TABLE THREE

How Did You Learn of Policy.

Reporter N=165

Editor N=132

*=Expressed as percentages

	Editors	Reporters
Supervisor	46.9*	31.5
Peers	10.0	6.3
Manual	16.7	62.2
Other	26.4	5.9
Formal instruction	54.5	60.7

TABLE FOUR A

Actions in Scenarios.

Scenario 1

	Editors		Reporters		
1="Reveal," 2="Conceal"					
Action	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
Reveal/conceal	1.879	.329	1.885	.321	
Reason					
1="Structural Value," 2="Personal Value"					
Structure/Personal	1.250	.436	1.248	.434	
What should management do?					
*=Expressed as percentages					
Take no action	12.5*		29.3		
Counsel	39.4		17.2		
Reprimand	4.2		19.2		
Suspend	4.2		8.1		
Fire	8.3		19.2		
Consult policy	8.3		2.0		
Reassign	8.3		5.0		

TABLE FOUR B

Scenario 2

	Editors		Reporters		
1="Reveal," 2="Conceal"					
Action	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
	1.375	.488	1.305	.462	
Reason					
1="Structural Value," 2="Personal Value"					
Structure/Personal	1.281	.453	1.305	.462	
What should management do?					
*=Expressed as percentages					
Take no action	9.1*		85.1		
Counsel	50.0		6.4		
Reprimand	8.3		2.1		
Suspend	0.0		0.0		
Fire	8.3		4.3		
Consult policy	0.0		0.0		
Reassign	0.0		0.0		

TABLE FOUR C

Scenario 3

	Editors		Reporters		
1="Reveal," 2="Conceal"					
Action	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
	1.867	.343	1.876	.331	
Reason					
1="Structural Value," 2="Personal Value"					
Structure/Personal	1.323	.471	1.267	.493	
What should management do?					
*=Expressed as percentages					
Take no action	29.2*		45.7		
Counsel	25.0		4.8		
Reprimand	8.3		11.4		
Suspend	4.2		1.0		
Fire	16.7		19.0		
Consult policy	4.2		8.6		
Reassign	4.2		8.6		

TABLE FIVE

Type of Ethics Policy.

Reporter N=165

Editor N=132

*=Expressed as percentages

Policy Type	Reporters	Editors
Written, formal	23.7*	25.0
Unwritten, formal	11.2	15.2
Informal	38.8	48.5
Varies	15.7	09.4
None	10.4	03.0

TABLE SIX

Use of Ethics Policy.

Reporter N=165

Editor N=132

1="Not at all," 10="Totally"

*=p<.05

	Editors		Reporters		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
"I understand"	7.875	2.134	5.661	2.527	*
"Others underst."	6.667	1.884	4.858	2.100	*
Can use policy	7.806	1.745	6.252	2.878	*
Important to me	8.125	2.074	7.015	2.445	*
Important to boss	7.571	2.332	6.219	2.719	*
Use own judgment	6.667	2.259	8.038	1.725	*
Paper enforces	7.321	1.634	5.701	2.279	*
Policy often deter.	6.839	2.437	4.983	2.737	*

TABLE SEVEN

What should the policy contain.

Reporter N=165

Editor N=132

1="Strongly disagree," 10="Totally agree"

*=p<.05

Issue	Editors		Reporters		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	t
Outside jobs	7.806	2.386	7.061	3.111	
Volunteer work	6.161	3.067	5.142	3.544	*
Free lunches, etc.	8.000	2.530	7.567	2.942	
Free tickets	8.097	2.508	7.978	2.846	
Source relations	6.645	2.497	6.493	2.996	
Newsroom relations	3.967	2.671	3.697	3.212	
Use of deception	8.581	2.630	7.947	3.274	
Anonymous sources	7.839	2.734	7.940	2.683	
Clear punishment	1.467	.507	1.394	.491	

Appendix I

Dear Journalist:

Media scrutiny of political candidates and a jury's order to two newspapers to pay a plaintiff for having revealed his name have once again brought the ethicality of the media into widespread public discussion. Though members of the media are often called upon to defend themselves and their profession, no one seems to know precisely what motivates reporters and editors to make certain decisions.

Your name has been selected at random from a list of all journalists working at daily newspapers in Ohio as part of a study attempting to learn whether reporters and editors reason differently when making ethical decisions, and whether that difference has an impact of other elements of newsgathering such as story selection, dealings with sources, reporter autonomy and interaction between reporter and editor. Additionally, it seeks to ascertain whether editors and reporters agree on what sorts of concerns should be addressed in codes of ethics and newsroom ethics policies.

Your participation will be strictly confidential: Only the researchers at The Ohio State University School of Journalism will see your individual answers.

Though others in your newsroom might also receive this series of questions, the overall number of journalists questioned is fairly small, making your participation crucial. Thank you for your time and insight.

Sincerely,

Kevin R. Stoner
Assistant Professor of Journalism
The Ohio State University

This first section of this series consists of three hypothetical situations. Please answer, as completely as possible, the questions at the end of each scenario.

Scenario 1:

A reporter covering the plight of war-weary Central Americans illegally entering the United States learns from a U.S. Immigration Service informant of a church in the United States where a group of refugees is hiding. The people have been granted sanctuary because they face certain execution, and their families and friends torture, if returned to their country. The reporter notes the existence of the church in a story and, after publication, receives a call from the church's minister, begging the reporter for the informer's name so the minister can protect the other refugees and other safe houses.

Should the reporter reveal the informer's name?

Why?

Is the reporter's duty to protect or reveal the informer's name?

Why ?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should reveal the name.

(a.)What circumstances would justify the revelation of the name?

(b.)If the reporter feels no personal loyalty to the informer, should he or she provide the name? Why?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should not reveal the name.
(a.) Is there any circumstance that would cause you to reveal the name? What would it be?

(b.) If the newspaper discovers the reporter has revealed the informant's name, what action should the newspaper take?

Scenario 2:

A reporter is working up a profile of the only gubernatorial candidate seemingly willing to address important issues with new ideas, who has a strong record of fighting corruption during his stint as a prosecuting attorney and who has repeatedly appeared in public with his wife and children, decrying the decay in public morality. The reporter, following up a rumor and pretending to be a friend of the candidate, visits a very discreet tavern catering to homosexuals and begins asking questions of patrons. Yes, he is told, the candidate often comes here with his long-time male lover.

Should the reporter use the information in a story?

Why?

Is the reporter's duty to protect the politician's privacy or inform the public?

Why ?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should use the information.
(a.)What circumstances would justify using the information?

(b.)If the reporter feels no personal loyalty to the politician, should he or she use the information? Why?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should not use the information.
(a.) Are there any circumstances that would cause you to use the information?

If so, what would they be?

(b.)What action should the newspaper take if the politician complains of unfairness?

Scenario 3:

In return for a promise not to identify anyone or divulge the location, a reporter is allowed to witness an illegal, organized dog fight. The reporter writes the story, including the facts that after the fight several owners killed the dogs that had been seriously injured while fighting, that the owners have entire kennels and that more fights are scheduled. The reporter keeps the promise to not mention names. A grand jury attempting to stop the practice subpoenas the reporter and demands to know names, places and locations.

Should the reporter give the grand jury the information it wants?

Why?

Is the reporter's duty to keep the promise of anonymity or try to stop the practice?

Why ?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should provide the information.
(a.)What circumstances would justify divulging using the information?

(b.)If the reporter feels no personal loyalty to the sources, should he or she divulge the information? Why?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should not divulge the information.
(a.) Is there any circumstance that would cause you to divulge the information?

What would it be?

(b.)What action should the newspaper take if the reporter complies with the grand jury's request?

Thank you for completing this section of the survey, please continue.

(OVER)

This section of the survey seeks to examine your relationship with others in the newsroom. Please circle the appropriate number at the end of each question.

(1.) On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 10 indicating "completely":
How closely do you think your answers to the three preceding hypothetical situations would match those of your immediate editor? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(2.) How closely do you think your answers to the situations will match those of your mid-level editor (city accent, features, sports, etc.)? [If this is the same person as your immediate editor, please skip this question.]
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(3.) How closely do you think your answers to the situations will match those of top-level management (assistant managing editor, managing editor, editor, publisher, etc.)? [If this is the same person as your immediate editor, please skip this question.] 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(4.) Below are six ways of thinking about an ethical decision. One is not better than another. Please indicate your disagreement or agreement with each statement. Let 1 equal "strongly disagree" and 10 equal "strongly agree."
1 - If I do this, my editor will punish me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2 - If I do this, I will be rewarded by my editor. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3 - The other reporters on the staff would do it this way. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4 - There is a rule that either allows this or forbids it, and I must follow that rule. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5 - Following rules is important, but a rule can be broken if a higher good is served. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6 - The decision that is right for me is the right decision, regardless of the rules. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(5.) Which method (1 through 6) best describes your immediate editor? _____

(6.) How long (months/years) have you worked with your immediate editor?_____

(7.) To the best of your knowledge, how much professional experience does your editor have? _______(years/months)

With 1 indicating "never" and 10 indicating "always," please respond to the following questions.

(8.) My editor chooses which stories I will cover. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(9.) My editor tells me what story angle to pursue. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(10.) My editor tells me which sources to use. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(11.) My editor allows me sufficient freedom to promise anonymity to sources. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(12.) My editor questions the quality of my sources. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(13.) My editor chooses the most appropriate length for my stories. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(14.) My editor rewrites my leads without consulting me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(15.) My editor tells me I have missed the "real" story angle. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(16.) My editor encourages me to be more aggressive. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(17.) My editor encourages me to get "the story behind the story." 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(18.) My editor encourages me to be more adversarial in my dealings with sources. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(20.) When you have a question regarding news value of an event, to whom do you turn for guidance? Please rank the order in which you use these people with 1 indicating the 1 least used and 5 the most used. [If your editor and top management are the same person, please indicate.]
_____your editor ______peers _____sources_____top management______make my own decision

21.) When you have a question regarding ethics, to whom do you most often turn for guidance? Please rank the order in which you use these people with 1 indicating the least used and 5 the most used. [If your editor and top management are the same person, please indicate.]
_____your editor ______peers _____policy_____top management_______make my own decision

(22.) About how many stories do you complete per day? ______

(23.) With 1 indicating "not at all" and 10 indicating "completely," how satisfied are you with this number?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(24.) Using a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "never" and 10 indicating "always": How often does your immediate editor encourage you to make your own ethical decisions when the newspaper has no written guidelines?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(25.) How often do you use your own best judgment when questions of ethicality and news judgment arise?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(26.) How often are you satisfied with this arrangement? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "does not enforce," and 10 indicating "rigidly enforces":
(27.) How does your immediate editor enforce newspaper policy, both written and unwritten? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(28.) About how many news-analysis type stories do you do per year? (If such stories would be inappropriate to your job description, please so indicate.) _____(number)

(29.) About how many investigative stories do you do per year? (If such stories would be inappropriate to your job description, please so indicate.) _____(number)

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "never" and 10 being "always":
(30.) How often does your editor encourage you to pursue an investigative story you have told him/her about?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "none" and 10 indicating "total":

(31.) How much freedom do you have to pursue investigative stories? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(32.) How satisfied are you with this arrangement? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "very poor" and 10 indicating "excellent":

(33.) Rate your professional relationship with your immediate editor. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(34.) Rate your personal relationship with your immediate editor. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(35.) Rate your overall satisfaction with your editor's actions on enforcement of policies. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(36.) Rate your overall satisfaction with your editor's actions on ethical decisions. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(37.) Rate your overall satisfaction with your editor's job performance. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Thank you for completing section two of the survey, please continue

(OVER)

This section of the survey seeks to examine your familiarity with ethics policies and your opinions about them.

(1.) What type of ethics policy does your newspaper have? Please use a checkmark.

_____ formal, written
_____ formal, unwritten
_____ informal, but exists
_____ varies from department to department
_____ none

On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 10 indicating "totally":
(2.) How familiar are you with the policy? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(3.) How aware of the policy are your co-workers? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(4.) How confident are you of your ability to apply the policy to a specific situation? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(5.) How important to you is the existence of an ethics policy? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(6.) How important to your editor is the existence of an ethics policy? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(7.) To what extent does the newspaper's ethics policy ___help ____hinder you? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(8.) On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "never" and 10 indicating "always," how often, does the policy determine your decision when you are confronted by an ethical dilemma? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(9.) How did you learn of this policy?
____supervisor _____peers _____policy manual ___________other (please specify)

(10.) Would your editor prefer that your publication had a written policy?_____yes _____no_____I don't know

(11.) Have you been exposed to structured instruction in ethics?

(11.) In what form? _____high school_____college _____workshops

On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 10 indicating "very":
(12.) How important are ethics considerations to your management? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(13.) How important are ethics considerations to you? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

With 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 10 indicating "strongly agree," please indicate whether you think the following concerns should be addressed in an ethics policy.

(14.)_____outside employment 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(15.)_____volunteer work 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(16.)_____free lunches, banquets, etc. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(17.)_____complimentary tickets 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(18.)_____fraternization with sources 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(19.)_____fraternization in the newsroom 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(21.)_____use of anonymous sources 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(22.)_____ please list any other concerns you think should be included. ________________________________

(23.) Should the policy contain stated punishment provisions? ___yes _____no

(24.) In general, How often do you encounter situations in the performance of your job?
_____once per day _____once per week ____once per month ____more

often

(25.) What is the circulation of your newspaper? _________

(26.) What is your beat/area of supervision?___________

(27.) How many years of professional newspaper experience do you have?_____

(28.) What is the highest educational level you have achieved?
High School _____B.S./B.A. ______M.S./M.A. _____Ph.D._____

(29.) What is the size of your non-supervisory editorial staff (reporters)? _____

(30.) Are you male or female? _____female _____male

(31.) What is your age? ______

Thank you. Please insert this questionnaire in the accompanying postage-paid envelope and mail it. If you have additional questions or comments, please contact Professor Kevin Stoner at (614) 292-2683.

Dear Editor:

Media scrutiny of political candidates and a jury's order to two newspapers to pay a plaintiff for having revealed his name have once again brought the ethicality of the media into widespread public discussion. Though members of the media are often called upon to defend themselves and their profession, no one seems to know precisely what motivates reporters and editors to make certain decisions.

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Sincerely,

Kevin R. Stoner
Assistant Professor of Journalism
The Ohio State University

This first section of the survey consists of three hypothetical situations. Please answer, as completely as possible, the questions at the end of each scenario.

Scenario 1:

A reporter covering the plight of war-weary Central Americans illegally entering the United States learns from a U.S. Immigration Service informant of a church in the United States where a group of refugees is hiding. The people have been granted sanctuary because they face certain execution, and their families and friends torture, if returned to their country. The reporter notes the existence of the church in a story and, after publication, receives a call from the church's minister, begging the reporter for the informant's name so the minister can protect the other refugees and other safe houses.

Should the reporter reveal the informant's name?

Why?

Is the reporter's duty to conceal or reveal the informant's name?

Why ?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should reveal the name.
(a.)What circumstances would justify the revelation of the name?

(b.)If the reporter feels personal loyalty to the informer, what should he or she do? Why?

(OVER)

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should not reveal the name.
(a.) Is there any circumstance that would cause you to support revealing the name? What would it be?

(b.) Should you take any action if you discover the reporter has decided to reveal the name? If so, what and why?

Scenario 2:

A reporter is working up a profile of the only gubernatorial candidate seemingly willing to address important issues with new ideas, who has a strong record of fighting corruption during his stint as a prosecuting attorney and who has repeatedly appeared in public with his wife and children, decrying the decay in public morality. The reporter, following up a rumor and pretending to be a friend of the candidate, visits a very discreet tavern catering to homosexuals and begins asking questions of patrons. Yes, he is told, the candidate often comes here with his long-time male lover.

Should the reporter use the information in a story?

Why?

Is the reporter's duty to protect the politician's privacy or to inform the public?

Why ?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should use the information.
(a.)What circumstances would justify using the information?

(b.)If the reporter feels personal loyalty to the politician, what should he or she do? Why?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should not use the information.
(a.) Is there any circumstance that would cause you to use the information? What would it be?

(b.) If the reporter decides to use the information, should you take any action? If so, what sort of action?

Scenario 3:

In return for a promise not to identify anyone or divulge the location, a reporter is allowed to witness an illegal, organized dog fight. The reporter writes the story, including the facts that after the fight several owners killed the dogs that had been seriously injured while fighting, that the owners have entire kennels and that more fights are scheduled. The reporter keeps the promise to not mention names. A grand jury attempting to stop the practice subpoenas the reporter and demands to know names, places and locations.

Should the reporter give the grand jury the information it wants?

Why?

Is the reporter's duty to keep the promise of anonymity or try to stop the practice of dog fighting?

Why ?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should provide the information.
(a.)What circumstances would justify using the information?

(b.)If the reporter feels personal loyalty to the sources, what should he or she do? Why?

Answer the following two questions only if you think the reporter should not divulge the information.
(a.) Is there any circumstance that would cause you to support divulging the information?

What would it be?

(b.) If the reporter decides to comply with the grand jury's request, should you take any action? If so, what?

Thank you for completing this section of the survey, please continue.

(OVER)

This section of the survey seeks to examine your relationships with others in the newsroom. Please circle the appropriate number at the end of each question.

On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 10 indicating "total," please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

My *best* reporter:
Has how many years of experience? _____
Seeks clarification from me if he/she is unsure of policy. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Requires little or no supervision. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Knows company policy on ethics. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Follows company policy. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Produces a high volume of daily stories. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Seeks to write analysis-type stories. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Seldom asks my advice. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Is willing to draw conclusions in stories. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Knows newsroom policy even if it is unwritten. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Defers to my news judgment. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Considers what my reaction will be before he/she acts. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Is aggressive in covering his/her beat. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Almost always picks the correct news angle for a story? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

My *worst* reporter:
Has how many years/months of experience?_____
Seeks clarification from me if he/she is unsure of policy. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Most often chooses the correct news angle for a story: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Is aggressive in covering his/her beat. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Requires little or no supervision. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Knows company policy on ethics. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Follows company policy. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Produces a high volume of daily stories. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Seeks to write analysis-type stories. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Follows my directions on story angles. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Seldom asks my advice. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Is willing to draw conclusions in stories. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Knows newsroom policy even if it is unwritten. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Defers to my news judgment. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Considers what my reaction will be before he/she acts. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(1.) On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 10 indicating "exactly":
How closely do you think your answers to the three preceding hypothetical situations would match those of your *best* reporter? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(2.) How closely do you think your answers to the situations will match those of your *worst* reporter?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(3.) How closely do you think your answers to the situations will match those of top-level management (assistant managing editor, managing editor, editor, publisher, etc.)? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(4.) Below are six ways of thinking about an ethical decision. One is not better than another. Please indicate your disagreement or agreement with each statement. Let 1 equal "strongly disagree" and 10 equal "strongly agree."
1 - If I am caught, my supervisor will punish me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2 - If I do this, I will be rewarded by my supervisor. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3 - The other editors on the staff would do it this way. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4 - There is a rule that either allows this or forbids it, and I must follow that rule. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5 - Following rules is important, but a rule can be broken if a higher good is served. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6 - The decision that is right for me is the right decision, regardless of the rules. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(5.) Which method (1 through 6) best describes your *best* reporter? _____

(6.) How long (months/years) have you worked with your *worst* reporter?_____

With 1 indicating "never" and 10 indicating "always, " please respond to the following questions.

(7.) When you have a question regarding news value of an event, to whom do you turn for guidance? Please rank the order in which you use these people with 1 indicating the 1 least used and 4 the most used. [If your editor and top management are the same person, please indicate.]
______peers _____sources_____top management______make my own decision

(8.) When you have a question regarding ethics, to whom do you most often turn for guidance? Please rank the order in which you use these people with 1 indicating the least used and 4 the most used. [If your editor and top management are the same person, please indicate.]
______peers _____policy_____top management_______make my own decision

(9.) About how many stories do you edit per day? ______

(10.) Using a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "never" and 10 indicating "always": How often do you encourage reporters to make their own ethical decisions when the newspaper has no written guidelines?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(11.) How often do you use your own best judgment when questions of ethicality arise?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "does not enforce," and 10 indicating "rigidly enforces":
(12.) How do you enforce newspaper ethics policy, both written and unwritten? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "never" and 10 being "always":
(13.) How often do you encourage your reporters to pursue an investigative story they have told you about?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "none" and 10 indicating "total":
(14.) How much freedom do you allow reporters to pursue investigative stories? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(15.) How satisfied are you with this arrangement? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "very poor" and 10 indicating "very good":
(16.) Rate your professional relationship with your *best* reporter . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(17.) Rate your professional relationship with your *worst* reporter . 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(18.) Rate your personal relationship with your *best* reporter. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(19.) Rate your personal relationship with your *worst* reporter. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(20.) Rate your overall satisfaction with your newspaper's actions on enforcement of policies. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(21.) Rate your overall satisfaction with your newspaper's actions on ethical decisions. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Thank you for completing section two of the survey, please continue.

(1.) What type of ethics policy does your newspaper have?
_____ formal, written
_____ formal, unwritten
_____ informal, but exists
_____ varies from department to department

_____ none

(OVER)

On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 10 indicating "very":
(2.) How familiar are you with the policy? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(3.) How aware of the policy are your reporters? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(4.) How confident are you of your ability to apply the policy to a specific situation? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(5.) How important to you is the existence of an ethics policy? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(6.) How important to your top management is the existence of an ethics policy? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(7.) To what extent does the newspaper's ethics policy ___help ____hinder you? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(8.) On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "never" and 10 indicating "always," how often, does the policy determine your decision when you are confronted by an ethical dilemma? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

(9.) How did you learn of this policy?
____supervisor _____peers _____policy manual __________other (please specify)

(10.) Would your reporters prefer that your publication had a written policy?_____yes _____no_____I don't know

(11.) Have you been exposed to structured instruction in ethics?

(11.) In what form? high school_____college _____workshops______

On a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 indicating "not at all" and 10 indicating "very":
(12.) How important are ethics considerations to your superiors? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(13.) How important are ethics considerations to you? 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

With 1 indicating "strongly disagree" and 10 indicating "strongly agree," please indicate whether you think the following concerns should be addressed in an ethics policy.

(14.)_____outside employment 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(15.)_____volunteer work 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(16.)_____free lunches, banquets, etc. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(17.)_____complimentary tickets 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(18.)_____fraternization with sources 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(19.)_____fraternization in the newsroom 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(20.)_____use of deception to obtain information 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(21.)_____use of anonymous sources 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
(22.)_____ please list any other concerns you think should be included. ________________________________

(23.) Should the policy contain stated punishment provisions? ___yes _____no

(24.) In general, how often do you encounter ethics situations in the performance of your job?
_____once per day _____once per week ____once per month ____more often_____less often

(25.) What is the circulation of your newspaper? _________

(26.) What is your area of supervision?____________

(27.) How many years of professional newspaper experience do you have?______

(28.) What is the highest educational level you have achieved?
_____ High School ______ B.S./B.A. _____ M.S./M.A. _____ Ph.D.

(29.) What is the size of your non-supervisory editorial staff (reporters)? _____

(30.) Are you male or female? _____female _____male
(31.) What is your age?_____

"All Brides are Not Beautiful": The Influence of Charlotte Curtis on Women's News Coverage at *The New York Times*

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"All Brides are Not Beautiful": The Influence of Charlotte Curtis on Women's News Coverage at the New York Times

In a memorial service in 1987 for a long-time New York Times employee, Publisher A.O. Sulzberger recalled how she sometimes made life difficult for him by often ruffling the feathers of New York's high and mighty. It was up to him to offer explanations:

> I played a round of golf with a young woman who obviously had more on her mind than her putting. After the third hole she couldn't hold back. "That was a terrible piece Charlotte Curtis wrote about my mother-in-law," she exploded. "Why did she have to write about all those diamonds and furs and the like? I was mortified"
>
> "I'm sorry," I replied. "But what did you mother-in-law think about it?"
>
> "That's the terrible part," she replied. "She loved it."[1]

Such is the story of Charlotte Curtis, who from 1961 to her death in 1987 served as women's-page and society reporter, women's-page editor, associate editor and columnist for the New York Times. Her irreverent style, which included price estimates of the gowns of New York's most elite society matrons, paved the way for her ris at the Times, and made her a role model for society and women's-page reporters across the country.[2] She also is credited by many, including Sulzberger, as the person who first expanded "women's" news from recipes and bridal gown descriptions to include such controversial topics as abortion and divorce.[3]

But Curtis' rise and her influence on newspapers nationwide stem in part from the reaction to her pieces by readers and editors alike. For example, in the memorial service, Sulzberger noted that, insult them as she may, the rich and famous in New York often considered themselves slighted only when Curtis did not write about them:

> That was our Charlotte. Skinning them without novocaine, yet they never felt a thing. Focusing a bright light on the foibles of society, yet they never blinked. Pecking at the pecking order, yet wounding only those who didn't make list....Indeed much of society coverage as we know it today, through many newspapers, mirrors Charlotte's model. 4

In one of her most famous stories, about a 1970 gathering by composer Leonard Bernstein for the Black Panther party, Curtis painted a picture of the composer in black turtleneck sweater, agreeing with the Panther field marshal Donald Cox' view that the Panthers must "take the means of production and put them in the hands of the people." "I dig absolutely," said Bernstein, whose wide-eyed, idealized view of the Panthers comes off clearly.[5] The article was heavily criticized by Bernstein's friends and others in New York society, who believed it was making light of the efforts to help the Panthers. In his book, Radical Chic and Maumauing the Flak Catchers," Tom Wolfe describes the the Bernstein's outrage when they saw Curtis' article repeating the ridiculous dialogue between Cox and Bernstein -- an article that was distributed across the country through New York Times News Service wires.[6]

II.

As editor of women's and family/style news from 1965 to 1974, Curtis was given by the Times considerable control over those pages. In addition to writing women's news, she was able to influence what was printed on the women's pages. Several top

Times employees credit her rise in the system to former managing editor Clifton Daniel, who liked Curtis' writing style and willingness to vary from the Times' staid, unchanging coverage of women and society.[7] He strongly believed society news was one of the most well read parts of the newspaper. By the late 1960s, several years after Daniel was named managing editor, he instituted some changes in coverage at the Times. In The Kingdom and the Power, his book about the Times of the 1960s, Gay Talese wrote:

> Though Daniel would prefer to be identified with several of The Times recent changes for the better -- the expanded coverage of cultural news, the more literary obituaries, the encouragement of flavor and mood in "hard news" stories that formerly would have been done in a purely routine way, he is more quickly credited with, or blamed for the women's page. [Assistant managing editor Ted] Bernstein and other critics say that the women's pages gets too much space, and they particularly oppose the publication of lengthy stories by the women's-page editor, Charlotte Curtis, a five-foot fast-stepping Vassar alumna, describing the activities of the wastrels from Palm Beach to New York at a time when most of America is moving toward a more egalitarian society. Although Miss Curtis is rarely flattering to her subjects, many of them lack the wit to realize this -- but what is more important about Miss Curtis' work is that Clifton Daniel likes to read it. 8

What was it that Daniel liked about Curtis' writing? Perhaps it was her seemingly fearless tendency to hold a mirror up to those she covered without fear of reprisal. For example, in another of her more well-known stories, coverage of a huge costume gala held by author and bon vivant Truman Capote in 1966, Curtis painted a rather ridiculous picture of the celebrities: "Arthur Schlesinger Jr. and William F. Buckley, neither of whom are short men, kept dancing with

with taller women" and "Mrs. Anne McDonnell Ford hugged her good friend, the Maharanee of Jaipur, who was invited at the very last minute."[9]

Curtis' frankness combined with her refusal to be intimidated or awed by the rich and famous, often made the news. The following item was included as part of the "Newsmakers" section of Newsweek magazine in 1970:

> One of New York's Sunday treats is the bridal section of The New York Times--a gold mine of social nuggets under women's editor Charlotte Curtis. Take the wedding of sugar heiress Ruth Hill Havemeyer and Sport magazine vice president John Norwood, the father of five children by his two broken marriages. "It was not a happy day for the bride's mother," reported the Times in its account of the Long Island society nuptials in Southhampton. "She did not attend the ceremony." Then the story quoted a letter to society editors from the mother of the bride: "John Norwood is completely unacceptable to the family in every way." Fit to print? The irate bridegroom didn't think so, but editor Curtis felt that the contretemps was newsworthy even though "I personally thought it was tasteless for a mother to comment about a child's marriage." 10

Of course, not all of the Times' management was amused by the frank stories and wedding announcements that appeared on Curtis' pages. A.M. Rosenthal, who became associate managing editor of the newspaper in 1967, was not always tolerant of Curtis and her news judgment.

In a story about the marriage of an Austrian princess on the women's page in 1969, the reporter (who did not receive a byline) wrote, "The bridegroom wore a matching Salzburg suit complete with pink silk tie and a dainty rose arrangement in the buttonhole. It is well known that he used to spend up to $100,000 a month playing host to young male friends at Bluhnbach -- usually seven at a time because, he said, he believed in groups of eight."[11]

This apparent allusion to the groom's homosexuality drew the wrath of Rosenthal, who sent the following memo to Curtis and several other staff members in the women's-news department:

> The attempt to make our stories interesting must not violate our own standards of taste and tenor and I think we all agree on that....But in the story of the marriage of Princess Auersperg to the Krupp heir, we did violate these standards. That was in the reference to the groom's homosexual proclivities. I think such material really has no place in the story at all....Please try to make sure that we do not get caught in this kind of situation again. 12

As she readily admitted to friends and to reporters during interviews, Curtis' style and news judgment were based on the belief that she considered herself a sociologist -- one who reported on what was going on in the same way a reporter covered the police, city hall or schools beat. In the mid-1960s, in particular, Time and Newsweek printed stories about Curtis' reporting, focusing on the fact that, as Time headlined its story, she was a "sociologist on the society beat." "By tradition, practice, choice and affinity, the typical society reporter gossips about her sources in their own terms," it said. "The Times' girl on the beat studies her subjects with the detachment of a professional sociologist."[13]

Newsweek went so far as to compare Curtis to F. Scott Fitzgerald: "Charlotte Curtis has been serving up such delicious slices of upper-crust life in a style that combines a Fitzgeraldian sense of mood with a reporter's eye for detail," the reporter wrote, "at a time when all too many society pages still offer little more than chitchat about women's club meetings....she infuses her reports with a passion for history....and a reportorial thoroughness...."[14]

Her frank style did not always sit well, however, with her managing editor Daniel. He sent her the following memo after a story appearing on her page mentioned a possible romance between Alexander Onassis and a baroness:

> The New York Times should not on any page in the paper engage in gossip or scandalmongering unless the circumstances are of the most unusual nature....The story about Mr. Onassis and Baroness von Thussen is gossip, and it is, in conventional terms, somewhat scandalous. [15]

III.

Curtis was the first to acknowledge that she considered the society and women's-page "beats" the same as any others on the newspaper, a philosophy which grew out of her upbringing and education. Charlotte Murray Curtis was born on December 19, 1928, in Chicago, to, as she would later acknowledge, a family of over-achievers. Her father, George Morris Curtis, was research surgeon at Ohio State University, and her mother, Lucile Atcherso Curtis, a dipomat who was the first woman to be a field officer in the Foreign Service. Charlotte Curtis often spoke about the dinner-time conversations she and her younger sister, Mary, would have with their parents as they grew up in Columbus, Ohio: "As a child, I was exposed to adult subjects at the dinner table. We children were drawn into discussions. We would make wild assertions, then we would be forced to defend them. We'd have arguments about what were facts."[16]

Further, she believed, she was reared in an unusual way for families in the 1930s and 1940s:

> I was never told not to get dirty or to keep my clothes clean. I was encouraged to take part in any kind of sport and to excel academically. It was never considered that I would not excel. And because there was no son on whom expectations could be placed, they were placed on me....I also came from a family that believed in doing worthwhile things even on my vacations. 17

During summer vacations from Vassar College, Curtis began her newspaper career -- as a reporter on her hometown newspaper, The Columbus Citizen, the daily Scripps-Howard paper. Her desire to cover "hard news" raised eyebrows on the Citizen. "When I wanted to work at the City Desk of The Columbus Citizen....they laughed. And then they said, 'We already have a woman.' That was the way it was in those days: A paper had one woman reporter -- the one they kept for the kind of stories that were assigned to women: articles about the bereaved or about abandoned children."[18]

Curtis ended up covering everything from fires to government, and apparently developed such a taste for it that she began working fulltime for the newspaper after her graduation from Vassar in 1950. By the late 1950s, she covered society and women's news, later becoming society editor. It was in Columbus where she began to develop the irreverent writing style that became so popular later in New York.

For example, in one story, she wrote about a visit to Columbus by Rose Kennedy, the 69-year-old mother of presidential candidate John F. Kennedy. Instead of writing solely about Mrs. Kennedy's dress, her lineage and her comments about her well-known family, Curtis caught her subject in a disagreeable state of mind:

> She [Mrs. Kennedy] said was too warm, that someone should turn on the air conditioning and that if there were going to be pictures, she'd like to put on a hat and gloves. She disappeared into her bedroom and returned wearing a white wool toque...."If we're going to be on television, I wish you'd tell me what questions you're going to ask," she said. Her accent is that of Boston. "I don't answer political questions. I talk about the way the children were brought up." 19

It must be assumed that top editors at The Citizen (later the Citizen-Journal) were pleased with Curtis' work -- after all, it ran in the paper. But, while she was essentially a native Columbus resident, her colleagues on the 100,000-circulation Citizen did not always understand her. One unidentified co-worker described her in a 1965 Time magazine story as having "the disposition of a thoroughbred -- overtrained, overbred and tense. She had a pride in being able to cope. She was against copelessness."[20]

Curtis once recalled how her colleagues at the Citizen-Journal teased her -- not always in jest -- about her Vassar background: "I was referred to as 'Vassar.' I was never called Charlotte or Miss Curtis....It was used in a pejorative way because somehow it was not nice being a rich girl from a rich suburb....and going to what was considered a rich women's college."[21]

IV.

Curtis' frank writing style and keen eye were cultivated even further when she became a women's page reporter on the Times in 1961. After eleven years on The Citizen and a brief marriage, Curtis grew bored with reporting for the Citizen, although the newspaper gave her freedom to cover all types of stories.[22] She wanted to work on the New York Herald Tribune, which she thought was one of the best-written newspapers in the country, although it is unknown whether she applied for a job there.

Following a ten-day tryout on the New York Post, the Times responded to her query letter and the two clippings she had sent them. She joined the women's department, which was then known as the "four F's" (food, fashion, furnishings and family), and covered home furnishings -- a topic about which she knew little. Curtis admitted that she had sent the newspaper the only two home furnishing stories she ever did -- ones, she acknowedged, that were "godawful."[23]

As part of an oral history project outlining the history of the Times, Curtis in 1983 spoke about her beginning years at that newspaper and recalled how ridiculous some aspects of her job seemed. Fortunately, she did not remain on the home furnishings beat very long, and was quickly shifted to the "fashion" part of the Four F's. She felt the women's editor, Elizabeth Penrose Howkins, a former editor of Vogue and Glamour magazines, was the epitome of outdated fashion:

> She had at least six fur coats that she would alternate. She was given to large topaz rings, which would be different on different days. [She displayed] a lot of affectation....I suppose in the fashion world it would it would have been considered beautiful but in any other world she would not have been considered beautiful....She never went anywhere without a hat. Enormous earrings. All full regalia. She would wear mostly turquoise eye shadow and what would be lovely about the turquoise eye shadow was that some time during the day...it would run down the side of her

> face. By five o'clock on any given day, Elizabeth Penrose Howkins had turquoise down to the tips of her ears! Of course, nobody ever told her about that. 24

Howkins' personal style was not the only thing that Curtis remembered. Curtis also recalled how she "edited" pictures: "She received from one of the photographers a picture of some great lady with bangs and she decided the woman didn't look good with bangs...She took one of her yellow grease pencils and she X'd out the bangs....and had an artist airbrush the bangs so when the picture appeared, this woman, who always had bangs, appeared without them." 25

Most important for Curtis, however, Howkins instilled in her employees a sense of individuality by letting them work on their own. Marylin Bender, who worked with Curtis during her early years on the women's section, recalls how Howkins -- conservative as she was -- allowed Bender and Curtis to be creative. "Mrs. Howkins gave us leeway," she said. "You could write something that wasn't flattering as reporting." 26

After Curtis worked in this environment for nearly two years, she acknowledged, she was "rescued" from the women's pages and assigned to the society department, which was separate department from women's news. It was during this time that she began to cultivate the style and reporting philosophy that she started developing in Columbus. She recalled her job:

> Reporting a society story or a women's news story, or anything, the techniques of reporting are the same regardless of what you do--a police station really isn't that different, it's finding out....Something has happened--a wedding has happened, a charity ball has happened, a murder has happened....You answer all the who, what, why, when and where and how and so on,

> but what you're doing is telling the world it happened. And if you can, you try and tell them what it means, if anything. 27

It apparently was this philosophy and quality of reporting that caught the eye of managing editor Daniel and then Harrison Salisbury, assistant managing editor. Salisbury, who in 1974 hand-picked Curtis as his successor as editor of the Times' prestigious op-ed page, said he admired her courage in writing about conventional topics in an unconventional style.[28] Salisbury even "picked" Curtis in 1967 to contribute to a book he wrote about Russia -- a selection that, because of Salisbury's stature nationally and on The Times, was considered an honor.[29] In 1965, After Howkins retired, Curtis was promoted to women's page editor.

Believing that women's news had to maintain the same honesty as the rest of the newspaper, Curtis acknowledged that even women's news was not always pretty:

> We were in the business of telling the truth. I mean, the story I was used to saying those days is that the notion used to be that all brides are beautiful, and all brides are not beautiful! But it was as though all wedding stories were written, "And the beautiful bride wore etc." Well, I'm sorry, but that doesn't have anything to do with reality. Some brides, as I said, are not beautiful....You were dealing with reality on our page. 30

This frankness undoubtedly changed the tenor and content of the women's pages. And New Yorkers, at least, were noticing the changes, as evidenced by a cover story in 1969 in New York Magazine, "How the New York Times Covers the Beautiful People." It outlines how coverage had changed since Curtis took over, offering examples and commenting on the writing style that now dominated the pages. The story also noted that Curtis had introduced coverage of non-Anglo-Saxon Protestants on the page: "On the society page there are those nippy nuptuals," New York wrote. "That unusual treatment of society called honesty; the introduction of black, Jewish and exotic society in the traditional definitions of the White Blouse page."[31] This, the magazine goes on, gave the section a dose of reality: "Women's pages used to read like something peeled off a sugar-shot cornflake box. Now Charlotte Curtis has changed all that."[32]

Perhaps the most interesting section in the story dealt with readers' reactions to this irreverence at one of New York's most conservative newspapers:

> Oh, beastly! News is so impolite!....But Charlotte's readers digested it. They came in two brands. There were the Naives: they often missed the irony and merely liked tor ead about richer lives than they lived. There were also the Meat Eaters, who wanted sullied rich fallible flesh. With every detail of hubris she threw in a tragic flaw for catharis. It was an old Greek formula: the flaws of the great--Ted Kennedy to the astronauts--outsell the perfections of the lowly. 33

Meanwhile, about this time -- the late 1960s and early 1970s -- women's pages across the country began changing their look and tone. Memos among Curtis and top Times editors editors and readers showed the newspaper was grappling with what to call the changing "women's" section. In a lengthy 1971 memo to Curtis, Assistant Managing Editor Seymour Topping discussed the problem.

> We have been studying for some time the question of a more suitable description for what now is designated in the front page News Index as Women's News. The present description has become progressively more unsatisfactory....What has been known as the Women's

> Page is read by readers of both sexes and covers a variety of subjects broader than the present description suggests....Secondly, an increasing number of our women readers are becoming alienated by the use of the term Women's News. 34

Later that year, on September 16, the "Food, Fashion, Family and Furnishings" section became indexed as "Family/Style."

Despite Sulzberger's comments at Curtis' memorial service, it is impossible to say she and the Times were the pacesetters in changing the content and tone of women's pages across the country. But the Times definitely was among the leaders. In a 1974 story about newspapers' women's sections in Ms. magazine, Lindsy Van Gelder wrote that it was the combination of the growth of the feminist movement in the early 1970s along with the efforts of at least three large newspapers that paved the way for changes in the women's pages:

> [In 1970] newspapers began covering abortion, rape child care, alimony, job discrimination, gay rights and other feminist issues, and taking fresh approaches toward their traditional subjects. Some women's sections --notably those of the Washington Post, the Chicago Tribune and the New York Times--are now considered by many in the industry to be the best written, best-read parts of the paper. 35

Nine years after she left the women's section, Curtis downplayed the Times' women's section as a trendsetter under her direction; but she acknowledged that the newspaper had the money and the resources to change the status quo and to do a good job of it. Because smaller newspapers had the initiative and the creativity, but not the manpower, to make those changes, the Times was able to lead the way. "From my point of view, we opened the windows and we brought a news quality to the page that it never had in the Ne York Times," she said.[36]

Not all women agreed with or supported the changes on women's pages. In her Ms. story, Van Gelder reflected the view of many feminists: that not all newspapers changed their women's pages in the 1970s as was widely believed, and attention to contemporary issues such as abortion and rape "ghettoized" those important topics and kept them from the front page of the newspaper.[37] For example, Van Gelder wrote that new, "slick" name changes on the women's pages, such as "Scene," "Tempo," etc., did not mean that the content of those pages had changed. "When the New Orleans Times-Picayune," for example, presents the title 'Women's Activities: Society/Fashion/Clubs' on a section whose front pages is graced by five blown-up photographs of five white fiancees and brides, you get a rough idea of what the Times-Picayune thinks of women," she pointed out.[38]

But even worse, in the eyes of Van Gelder and others, was the continued ghettoization of "women's" news on those pages -- even though the topic of such news may have been changed:

> The name change may liberate the content, but the section is still a dumping ground for anything the male editors consider a "woman's" story. So we get all the serious news stories about the Equal Rights Amendment, rape-law changes, back-pay lawsuits, and so forth, back among the girdle ads instead of on page one or two or three where they belong. 39

V.

It is unknown if Curtis had a response to this. But it is apparent that she hesitated, even in the 1970s, to call herself, or perhaps stereotype herself, as a "feminist." Her second husband, Dr. William Hunt, described her as a "natural" feminist: one who did not label herself, but believed her actions indirectly helped women and furthered their position.[40]

Hunt also recalled how Curtis felt insulted when the Times featured her in a promotion for the newspaper. As part of a promotional effort for some of its writers and columnists, the newspaper designed a poster featuring a picture of Curtis, accompanied by the words, "Down with Ladies, Up with Women, Off With the White Gloves." Curtis was outraged because, as she said, "I wear white gloves!" She requested the posters be taken down.[41]

Marylin Bender noted that Curtis was sympathetic to to the efforts of labor unions at the Times, but, after becoming an editor, could not actively participate in them.[42] Similarly, her role as an editor may have precluded her from taking a more active role in a sex discrimination lawsuit filed against the newspaper in 1973 led by four female reporters who claimed they received lower pay and fewer promotions than men on the newspaper.

In A Place in the News, Kay Mills notes Curtis told a Times reporter, before the suit was settled, that "the women's charges against the paper are generally true."[43]

So why did Curtis try to change the great, gray Times and write for an audience that went beyond New York society? It was her deep belief that the Times was not written exclusively for New Yorkers and her attitude that she, withher Midwestern roots, had never become a "true" New Yorker.

Most of the profiles written about Curtis mention her ties to Columbus throughout most of her career at the Times. Her closeness to her mother, who lived in Columbus since the family moved there in 1932, reinforced these ties, as did her marriage in 1972, at 43, to Hunt, an Ohio State University neurosurgeon. Curtis and Hunt maintained a commuter marriage for fifteen years, with Curtis usually flying to Columbus on weekends. It was perhaps the attitude that the world does not revolve around New York society that led her to indirectly mock those who took it too seriously. As New York magazine wrote in 1969:

> How do you say Columbus? Sense above sensibility.... A rotten French accent. Columbus is flat, and maybe skepticism grows there from being in the middle ground looking at two freak extremes--the neurasthenic Europe-manic East plying its inverted forks and Americana West. Perhaps being from Columbus accounts for Charlotte's hesitancy to accept royalty and the whole manufactured idea of society. 46

Many of the ten friends and co-workers who spoke at Curtis' memorial service at Lincoln Center on May 20, 1987, noted that her ties to Columbus, combined with her love for the energy and diversity of New York, shaped her writing and career. New York Daily News columnist Liz Smith, a native of Texas, recalled how Curtis always reminded her of her Southern roots: "She would whisper to me under her breath at parties, where she thought I was having too much fun and not paying enough attention, 'Don't forget, you're from Texas. Don't forget Ohio. Don't forget, America is out there! Not here necessarily."[45]

Curtis returned to Columbus about a year before her death, when she became too ill from cancer to work, but her last days in April, 1987, were not completely filled with pain. "She said that the fourth day before she died was one of the happiest of her life because the Ohio spring came in through open windows," Hunt recalled.[46]

Despite her influence and position on the newspaper, Curtis, was not immune to the politics of the newspaper. After Daniel was removed as managing editor in 1969, A.M. Rosenthal was given more authority for day-to-day operations of the newspaper. Rosenthal began to push for changes in the women's pages, including more fashion stories and fewer of the long stories that Daniel liked. Rosenthal wrote in a 1971 memo to Curtis:

> There are a number of things..that I think could improve the page...A somewhat lighter mix than we sometimes have. We don't have to eliminate sociology, but we can go lighter on it....Fewer of the long, long stories....More fashion news. It may be that you are right that there isn't much fashion news around. It may also be, Charlotte, that your own known disinclination and even distaste for fashion news has had effect on your staff and they are not getting the fashion news or presenting [it] the way they might if you were really enthusiastic about the subject. 47

She received several other memos from Rosenthal, repeating the same theme of change. While this was no doubt frustrating, her alignment with Daniel and Salisbury eventually led to a further promotion and allowed her to report to someone other than Rosenthal.

Salisbury in 1970 became editor of the newspaper's op-ed page, which he created to give a forum for opinion to those outside of the Times. Respected as a reporter, author and editor before the advent of the op-ed page, Salisbury gained new respect outside the paper for this forum of opinion. When it was time for him to take mandatory retirement in 1974, he hand-picked Curtis to succeed him as op-ed editor; she, like Salisbury, would report directly to Times publisher A.O. Sulzberger.

Salisbury said there was never any question in his mind as to his replacement. He admired Curtis' gutsy writing style, her unconventional news judgment, and her willingness to take chances. He believed she was the only one on The Times for the job.[48] When Curtis became editor of the op-ed page, she was also given the title of associate editor of the newspaper and was the first woman to have her name appear on the newspaper's masthead.

***

Curtis' last year in Columbus was a painful one physically, according to Hunt,[49] but several of her friends said it was not one in which she remained idle. Marylin Bender remembered correspondence with her in March, one month before Curtis died:

> The last letter she wrote me, dated March 1st....exulted the departure of [former U.S. Chief of Staff] Donald Regan from the White House, forced out, she said, by a strong Smith graduate, Nancy Reagan. And then Charlotte offered a story idea for The Business World, the business magazine of the New York Times of which I am currently the editor. It was a great idea about the new business tycoons. I wrote back, "It's a great story, Charlotte. The only problem is I know of one reporter, and only one reporter, who would get the story." 50

Richard Clurman, Curtis' longtime friend, was assigned by Curtis the task of arranging a memorial service for her. And, as he noted, the directions were specific: she selected the Lincoln Center location of the service the music, the flowers, and even the flower arrangers.[51] But most telling was the note she left Clurman shortly before her death, as final instructions for the memorial service. Clurman described the note:

> She wrote: With any luck, she will die with her eyebrows and eyelashes properly painted, her hair combed and a smile on her face. She had a glorious life, loved her work, and was paid to do what she would have done for free. So please celebrate, she wrote, followed by two exclamation points. 52

As Clurman added, Curtis' friends wanted to make the service the kind of memorial she would have wanted to cover herself.

Notes

1. Typescript, A.O. Sulzberger, May 20, 1987. Used with permission of William Hunt, Columbus, Ohio.

2. Robert D. McFadden, "Charlotte Curtis, a Columnist For The Times, Is Dead at 58," New York Times, April 17, 1987,

3. See, for example, McFadden's article and Sulzberger's comments made during memorial service.

4. Sulzberger.

5. Charlotte Curtis, "Black Panther Philosophy Is Debated at the Bernsteins," New York Times, January 15, 1970.

6. Tom Wolfe, Radical Chic and Mau-Mauing the Flak Catchers, (New York: Farrar, Strauss & Giroux,) 1970, pp. 78-80.

7. Interviews, Marylin Bender, October 9, 1989, and Harrison Salisbury, December 12, 1989.

8. Gay Talese, The Kingdom and the Power, (Cleveland: The World Press Co., 1969), p. 11.

9. Charlotte Curtis, "Capote's Black and White Ball, 'The Most Exquisite of Spectator Sports,'' New York Times, November 29, 1966.

10. "Newsmakers," Newsweek, July 27, 1970, p. 46.

11. New York Times, "Princess von Auersperg is Wed," February 15, 1969.

12. Memorandum, A.M. Rosenthal to Charlotte Curtis, February 17, 1969. Used with permission of William Hunt.

13. "Sociologist on the Society Beat," Time, February 19, 1965, p. 51.

14. "Upper Crust," Newsweek, September 28, 1964, p. 62.

15. Memorandum, Clifton Daniel to Charlotte Curtis, May 29, 1967. Used with permission of William Hunt.

16. "Charlotte Curtis," New York, July 28, 1975, p. 43.

17. Ellen Bilgore, "Charlotte Curtis: She did it her way," Harper's Bazaar, March, 1981, p. 72.

18. Ibid.

19. Charlotte Curtis, "Mrs. Kennedy: Mother Comes to Town,"

Columbus Citizen-Journal, October 19, 1960.

20. "Reporters: Sociologist on the Society Beat," Time, February 19, 1965, p. 51.

21. Charlotte Curtis, New York Times oral history project, June 21, 1983, New York Times, New York.

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid.

26. Interview, Marylin Bender, October 9, 1989.

27. Curtis, oral history project.

28. Interview, Harrison Salisbury, December 12, 1989.

29. Harrison Salisbury, The Soviet Union: The Fifty Years, New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1967, pp. 33-58.

30. Curtis, oral history project.

31. Julie Baumgold, "Charlotte, Star Reporter," New York October 6, 1969, p. 41.

32. Ibid. p. 39.

33. Ibid. p. 46.

34. Memorandum, Seymour Topping to Charlotte Curtis, February 17, 1969. Used with permission of William Hunt, Columbus, Ohio.

35. Lindsy Van Gelder, "Women's Pages: You Can't Make News Out of a Silk Purse," Ms., November 1974, p. 12.

36. Curtis, oral history project.

37. Van Gelder, "Women's Pages: You Can't Make News Out of a Silk Purse," p. 12.

38. Ibid,

39. Ibid,

40. Interview, William Hunt, William, June 13, 1988.

41. Ibid.

42. Interview, Marylin Bender, October 9, 1989.

43. Kay Mills, A Place in the News, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company), 1988, p. 159.

44. Baumgold, "Charlotte, Star Reporter," p. 46.

45. Interview, Liz Smith, December 14, 1989.

46. Typescript, William Hunt, May 20, 1987. Used with permission of William Hunt, Columbus, Ohio.

47. Memorandum, A.M. Rosenthal to Charlotte Curtis, November 2, 1971. Used with permission of William Hunt, Columbus, Ohio.

48. Interview, Harrison Salisbury, December 12, 1989.

49. Typescript, William Hunt, May 20, 1987. Used with permission of William Hunt, Columbus, Ohio.

50. Typescript, Marylin Bender, May 20, 1987. Used with permission of William Hunt, Columbus, Ohio.

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When Newspapers Aren't There:

Getting Information in a Media-Poor Environment

by

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Overview

Our era has been described as one of "media abundance" and communication inequality.[1] Such characterizations direct our attention away from the media and toward individuals as sources of the "noise" that interferes with the communication process. They also imply that information is available in situations of media abundance -- at least to some -- that would not be available in situations of media scarcity. The privileged recipients of this information are those who are the best educated, most intelligent and most prosperous. Such people, diffusion of innovations research tells us, are best able to see the benefits of new media technology, have the least difficulty in learning how to use it, and can best afford it. Such individual differences are leading to the emergence of "information classes" in the media-rich society, in this view.

A related belief puts some of the responsibility on the media themselves. In this view, the abundance of media and the appearance of new media have contributed to communication noise, they are creating among even sophisticated users of the media "information overload." Ithiel de Sola Pool calculated that words made available to Americans through 17 media increased at an annual rate of 8.9 percent between 1960 and 1977 while per capita consumption of words from these media grew at an annual rate of only 1.2 percent.[2] This belief, too, contains the assumption that media abundance is equivalent to information abundance.

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[1] Denis McQuail, "With the Benefit of Hindsight: Reflections on Uses and Gratifications Research," *Mass Communication Review Yearbook, Vol. 5,* Michael Gurevitch and Mark R. Levy, eds., Beverly Hills: Sage, 1985.

[2] Ithiel de Sola Pool, "Tracking the Flow of Information," *Science*, 221 (August 12, 1983), p. 609.

Both views, but especially the "information overload" view, carry a contrary undercurrent. While information overload is typically presented as a challenge to be met through social action such as improved education, there is another way in which the problem can be viewed. There is the suggestion that perhaps we were better off when our media systems were less complex, when less information was flowing and through fewer channels. It is a Rousseauian view of communication, and one that seems to have gone unexamined. But should the ideal media system be so simple? That is a policy question facing many countries and some states today. It is in their interest that this question be addressed.

The study reported here is a comparison of two media systems, one media rich the other media poor. The questions it asks regarding the media systems:

> RQ_1: What functions do the various media in the media-poor system perform in comparison with the media in the media rich system?

and

> RQ_2: When newspapers are not easily available, will other media assume their information function?

Three research questions are asked about media audiences. All are questions about knowledge gaps. The second and third are conditional on an affirmative answer to the first:

> RQ_3: Are there knowledge gaps in the media-rich and media-poor systems?

> RQ_4: Are the knowledge gaps greater in one system than in the other?

> RQ_5: Do the preferences of some individuals for media relatively low in information content contribute to knowledge gaps in media-rich environments?

The media abundance, information inequality characterizations raise other questions deserving of investigation about the relationship between media-rich, media-poor environments and information-rich, information-poor media users.

Are the relationships simple and direct or are they more complex? [3] Uses and gratifications research focuses on individuals -- or aggregates of individuals -- and examines how they use media to gratify needs, some of which have little to do with the information content of the media. This active-audience approach minimizes the power of the media that has been observed in agenda setting research. The power that is of interest in uses and gratifications research resides with the audience. This approach does not encourage detailed examination of the media environments within which users are located -- though it does not foreclose such examination. Typically, uses and gratifications studies examine which of the available media alternatives users prefer for gratifying different needs[4] or -- a theme in recent research -- changes in the media behavior of users when media fail to provide expected gratifications.[5] This research, in looking for an audience frustration factor, has distinguished between "gratifications sought" and "gratifications obtained," and has added "expectations" to the uses and gratifications vocabulary. This research has, occasionally, examined motives for avoiding media.[6]

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[3] A rural sociologist, for example, suggests that the relationships are relatively simple: "The potential also exists for rural areas to be left even further behind urban areas than happened in the late stages of the industrial revolution." Don A. Dillman, "The Social Impacts of Information Technologies in Rural North America," *Rural Sociology*, 50 (1985),p. 3. The view is also given expression by Heather Hudson who cites the International Commission for Worldwide Telecommunications Development as having pointed out "that the 'information gap' between industrialized and developing countries is reflected in their access to telecommunications resources." Heather Hudson, "New Communications Technologies: Policy Issues for the Developing World," *International Political Science Review*, 7 (July 1986), 332-343.

[4] For example, J.D. Rayburn II, Philip Palmgreen and Tawney Acker, "Media Gratifications and Choosing a Morning News Program," *Journalism Quarterly* 61 (1): 149-156 (Spring 1984), and Philip Palmgreen, Lawrence A. Wenner and J.D. Rayburn II, "Gratification Discrepancies and News Program Choice," *Communication Research* 8 (October 1981), pp. 451-478.

[5] See J.D. Rayburn II and Philip Palmgreen, "Merging Uses and Gratifications and Expectancy Value Theory," *Communication Research* 11 (October 1984), pp. 537-562 ; John J. Galloway and F. Louise Meek, "Audience Uses and Gratifications: An Expectancy Model," *Communication Research* 8 (October 1981), pp. 435-449; and Jim Van Leuven,"Expectancy Theory in Media and Message Selection, *Communication Research* 8 (October 1981), pp. 425-434.

[6] Philip Palmgreen and Patsy L. Cook, "Avoidances, Gratifications, and Consumption of Theatrical Films: The Rest of the Story," paper presented to International Communication Association

Media users, in these studies, are shoppers in media-rich environments.

Such models can be applied to large systems only with some risk. Their assumption of media diversity is less likely to be met in all parts of a large system than in a small one. While the United States may be described as a media-rich nation, it contains areas that can not be so characterized. The largest of these media-poor areas is contained within the state of Alaska. In the rural areas of this state -- as in smaller rural areas in some other states -- it is questionable that communication models based on assumptions of media abundance accurately describe the communication process.

In rural Alaska -- an area one-fifth the size of the contiguous 48 states with a population of about 250,000 -- , the broadcast media are more easily available than are the print media. There are no local television stations or local dailies. Radio stations, and to some extent weekly newspapers, have regional rather than local audiences. The media mix available in Anchorage, in contrast, is similar to that in other cities of about 240,000 residents. The active-audience view of media use would suggest that rural Alaskans would look to other media -- most probably radio -- to supply gratifications that are provided by newspapers in media-rich environments. If the available media are an inadequate substitute for newspapers in meeting surveillance needs, knowledge gaps between rural and urban Alaskans will be found.

Tichenor, Donohue and Olien, in their knowledge gap research, have looked at the diffusion of information about scientific and conflict issues in metropolitan areas and rural communities.[7] In their report of one of these

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Annual Conference, New Orleans, June 1, 1988. Palmgreen discusses other research which has looked at avoidance motivations in "Uses and Gratifications: A Theoretical Perspective," *Communication Yearbook 8*, Robert N. Bostrom, ed., Bruce H. Westley, associate ed.,Sage: Beverly Hills, 1984, pp. 20-55.

[7] Phillip J. Tichenor, George A. Donohue and Clarice N. Olien, "Mass Media Flow and Differential Growth in Knowledge," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 34 (1970), pp. 159-170, and Phillip J.

studies, they noted, "Reading a daily newspaper from a distant metro area is a long-time albeit declining tradition in small-town America" and they said the metro daily "serves as an integrating force linking the small town to the larger social system." [8] In discussing the relationship between media preferences and knowledge gaps, they observed, "Usually, the higher the use of and preference for print media, the higher the level of knowledge about public affairs topics." [9] While education has been the central independent variable in many knowledge gap studies, media and community structure variables have also been examined.[10]

Wright has speculated on what might be observed if a society in which all communication was interpersonal were compared with one in which no one could communicate directly with anyone else. [11] Alaska's situation doesn't provide such a sharp contrast, but it does permit comparison of populations whose communications systems are markedly different. It provides what Windahl, Höjerback and Hedinsson described, in talking about media deprivation studies, as "unique quasi-experimental opportunities to validate current concepts

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Tichenor, George A. Donohue and Clarice N. Olien, *Community Conflict & The Press*, Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980.

[8] Phillip J. Tichenor, Clarice N. Olien and George A. Donohue, "Effect of Use of Metro Dailies on Knowledge Gap in Small Towns,: *Journalism Quarterly* 64 (Summer-Autumn 1987), pp. 329-336.

[9] C.N. Olien, G.A. Donohue and P.J. Tichenor, "Community Structure and Media Use," in *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, vol. 1, G. Cleveland Wilhoit, ed.; Harold de Bock, associate ed.; Beverly Hills: Sage.

[10] Cecilie Gaziano lists 58 knowledge gap studies in which education was the independent variable in "The Knowledge Gap: An Analytical Review of Media Effects," paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Athens, Ohio, July 1982. One of the studies that looks at structural variables: Clarice N. Olien, George A. Donohue and Phillip J. Tichenor, "Structure, Communication and Social Power: Evolution of the Knowledge Gap Hypothesis," *Mass Communication Review Yearbook*, vol. 4, Ellen Wartella and D. Charles Whitney, eds; Sven Windahl, associate ed.; Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983.

[11] Charles R. Wright, "Functional Analysis and Mass Communication Revisited," in Jay G. Blumler and Elihu Katz, editors, *The Uses of Mass Communications, Current Perspectives on Gratifications Research*, Sage: Beverly Hills, 1974, pp. 197-212, esp. p. 199.

in the field and to look at various aspects of media use and habits from new angles."[12]

The Media in Alaska

Two relatively distinct media systems have developed in Alaska. On the one hand is the largely private, commercial media system that reaches about 240,000 residents of Anchorage and nearby areas. This system in the late 1980s included 16 radio stations, four VHF and two UHF television stations, a 37-channel cable television system, daily mail delivery, two independently owned daily newspapers, and several locally-produced magazines. A trans-Pacific fiber-optic cable being laid this year will soon permit broad bandwidth communication between Anchorage and the West Coast and Japan.

Despite Anchorage's distance from the lower 48 states, satellite technology has made possible same-day, even live coverage of news events on television. This is a relatively recent development. The first live satellite TV broadcast in Alaska was of Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon in July 1969. During the 1986 legislative session in Juneau, several hundred miles away, Anchorage residents could watch daily, half-hour summaries of the day's proceedings on public television. Commercial radio stations offered a variety of musical formats, ranging from country-western to rock. [13] The public station also provided jazz, soul and classical music, as well as other types of programming intended to reach various small interest groups. It offered Spanish-language programming and it had several special programs during black history month in 1986, for example. [14]

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[12] Sven Windahl, Ingrid Höjerback, and Elias Hedinsson, "Adolescents Without Television," *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 30 (Winter 1986), p. 61.

[13] The stations and their formats are discussed in "Unraveling the ratings' mysteries" by Carol Murkowski, *The Anchorage Times*, Jan. 31, 1987, pp. C2 and C3.

[14] Interview with Bruce Smith, general manager of KSKA Public Radio, February 1987.

The rural media system in Alaska is far different. Most rural communities can be reached only by plane or – if they are on the coast or a river – by boat. About half of them depend on the unlikely combination of satellite technology, over-the-air radio signals and single-engine mail planes for their communication links with the outside world. The mail planes bring newspapers, magazines and books and also provide a means of transportation. The only communities linked to the larger world by broadcast microwave systems are those near Anchorage and Juneau. Universal telephone service has been a state policy goal since the 1970s, and the statewide telephone company reported in 1985 that it had nearly been attained.[15]

Rural Alaskans often do not have a choice of radio or television stations. They do not have a local daily newspaper. The larger regional centers have weekly newspapers, but many smaller communities do not. Not only do they not have the variety *within* media, they do not have the variety *of* media. Within the lifetimes of many rural Alaskans, these limitations were even more severe:

> . . . in rural Alaska . . . even the most conventional forms of exchange and argumentation were difficult in the communications environment of the 1950s and 1960s. There was no telephone or television service, and high frequency radio was highly unreliable.[16]

While the communications environment has improved, rural Alaskans remain media poor.

A network of 15 public radio stations and five repeater stations reaches much of rural Alaska. Where commercial broadcast stations exist, they tend to be small and struggling. About 10 percent of the state's residents are unable to receive any broadcast communications other than those funded in whole or in part by the state.[17] Forty-one communities with a total population of more than 4,000 did not, in 1987, receive any radio signals at all. Residents of St. Paul Island off Alaska's west coast could receive only Radio Moscow until a public radio repeater station was installed there.[18]

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[15] It reported that the number of access lines had grown from 149,390 in 1980 to 232,717 in 1984. The U.S. Census Bureau's estimate of state population in 1985 was 522,000. Alascom, Inc., "Policies in Conflict: A Briefing Paper on Alaska Telecommunication Issues," 1985, pp, 6, 17.

[16] Patrick Daley and Beverly James, "An Authentic Voice in the Technocratic Wilderness: Alaskan Natives and the *Tundra Times*, " *Journal of Communication* 36 (Summer 1986), p. 13.

Nonetheless the broadcast media are more readily available to rural Alaskans than are the print media. There are no daily papers, and it may take three or four days or -- if the weather is bad -- much longer for daily papers to arrive from Anchorage, Fairbanks or Juneau.[19] About 20 of the larger communities such as Nome and Bethel have weekly newspapers, some of which include wire service news, but about 220 communities have no local newspapers. There is a statewide newspaper for Natives, the *Tundra Times*. It is published weekly in Anchorage.

Radio is used in rural Alaska for communications that might be accomplished in person or by mail in other states. A number of commercial and public radio stations provide message services with names like "Tundra Drums," "Bush Pipeline," and "Muskeg Messages."[20] A judge in the North Slope village of Barrow, for example, testified to a legislative committee in the spring of 1987 that he used public radio to notify jurors when to report for jury duty.

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[17] Based on information in a memorandum from Herb Holeman, Alaska Public Broadcasting Commission engineer, to Charles Northrip, APBC executive director, Feb. 24, 1987.

[18] Interview with Diane Kaplan, director, Alaska Public Radio Network, February 1987.

[19] A woman from Petersburg in Southeast Alaska testified at a House Special Committee on Telecommunications hearing: "'My newspapers are five to 10 days late and during Christmas they don't arrive at all.'" From James D. Wasserman, "Villagers argue for public radio," *The Anchorage Times*, Feb. 10, 1987, p. A-8.

[20] The services are described in "Somebody's Out There: Dreams of wilderness living lure loners to isolated homes," by Debbie McKinney, *Anchorage Daily News*, April 20, 1987, pp. C1-C2. The article says, "According to the Federal Communications Commission, these programs are unique to Alaska."

The history of commercial television programming in much of rural Alaska is a brief one, beginning in 1976 with a satellite Television Demonstration Project in 24 communities. That evolved into a statewide satellite channel that in the late 1980s reached 248 communities with populations of 25 or more. The channel was created with a special dispensation from the Federal Communications Commission and is funded by the state.[21] The Rural Alaska Television Network (RATNET) broadcasts a combination of commercial and noncommercial programming that is selected by a 17-member board (the board includes representatives of Native corporations, the Alaska Department of Education and the University of Alaska) to communities across the state. Each community has an earth station and a low power television transmitter for receiving the signal and relaying it to households within the community.[22]

Little programming is created specifically for RATNET. Commercial and public television programming is made available at no cost by the stations in Anchorage. Two of the Anchorage stations provide local newscasts for rebroadcast; both of these newscasts are oriented toward Anchorage audiences. One of the stations tried in 1982 and 1983 to provide a more state-oriented newscast but found it unprofitable and ended the project after six months.[23] RATNET costs the state about $3 million annually, and 90 percent of this money is to defray the technical costs of transmitting the signal.

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[21] A discussion of the formative years of this channel is provided in Beverly James and Patrick Daley, "Origination of State-Supported Entertainment Television in Rural Alaska, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 31 (Spring 1987), pp. 169-180.

[22] The closest parallel to this system would be Canada's use of ANIK satellites to transmit the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's network to Native communities in the far north. See Heather Hudson, "New Communications Technologies: Policy Issues for the Developing World," *International Political Science Review,* 7 (1986), pp. 332-343. Effects of the Canadian system are discussed in Gary O. Coldevin and Thomas C. Wilson, "Effects of a Decade of Satellite Television in the Canadian Arctic," *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 16 (September 1985), pp. 329-354.

[23] Interview with Al Bramstedt Jr., general manager, KTUU-TV, Anchorage, February 1987.

About 30 communities on the west coast of Alaska, near Bethel, receive television programming from the public television station located there. It is the only one of Alaska's four public TV stations that is located in a rural area and the only one that broadcasts some programs in a Native language: Yupik (even RATNET does not broadcast Native-language programs; its directors reason that there are too many Native languages and none of them is understood by members of tribes in other parts of the state [24]). The public broadcasting system receives a little more than $6 million annually from the state; this represents about 40 percent of its total costs.

In 1985 11 rural communities had cable systems that were essentially distribution systems for non-network programming from the Lower 48. These ranged in size from a 60-subscriber system in Port Lions to a 781-subscriber system in Valdez. Most systems offered about 10 channels; only one offered as many as 21.[25] Many communities, however, are too small to be attractive sites for commercial cable or satellite TV systems, as a proposal put forward to a committee of the state legislature in early 1986 indicated.[26] Costs of cabling communities in the arctic can reach $10,000 a mile, [27] and even provision of satellite TV appears to be uneconomic for communities with fewer than 50 households. There are about 60 such communities in the state.

Thus, not only is the rural portion of the state's population media poor, it is likely to remain so for some time.

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[24] The Native population includes Inupiaq and Yupik Eskimos; Athabascan, Tlingit, and Haida Indians; and Aleuts. There are four major language groups: Eskimo, Aleut, Athabascan and Tlingit.

[25] *Broadcasting/Cablecasting Yearbook*, Storer Communications, 1985, pp. B-11-12.

[26] Michael Roberge and Bob Allison, "North Star Plan," a proposal for a commercial satellite television network presented to the House Special Committee on Telecommunications, March 1987.

[27] Interview with Augie Hiebert, chief executive officer, Northern Television, Anchorage, February 1987.

Methodology

Information about Alaska's communication media, about Alaskans in media-rich and media-poor environments, and about the state's role in developing communication systems was collected over a period of 18 months using a variety of strategies. The information gathering was supported by grants from Alaska's Joint Interim Committee on Telecommunications and the House Special Committee on Telecommunications.

Information about Alaska's media comes from 21 interviews conducted between January and May 1987 with broadcast station owners and managers, members of the board of directors of the Rural Alaskan Television Network, cable system operators, other telecommunication experts and with state officials.

The primary source of information about perceptions of the media was a telephone survey of 200 households, 100 in Anchorage and 100 in rural Alaska, conducted between Nov. 1 and Nov. 16, 1986. Because the intent of the survey was to compare media use and gratifications sought in quite different media environments, larger towns and small cities were excluded from the population from which the 100 rural households were drawn. Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, Kodiak and Sitka as well as rural areas near Anchorage were excluded. The survey was pretested at the annual convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives in October 1986 and on students in an introductory mass communication class.

Lists of random phone numbers based on the sizes of the various exchanges were generated by the University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute for Social and Economic Research for the survey. It was necessary to randomly select numbers from the phone directories of a few communities because of the small size of their exchanges.

Two problems in the rural survey were language barriers and bad phone connections. A handful of survey attempts were unsuccessful because of language problems. Bad line connections made a few of the interviews difficult. After completing one rural interview, the interviewer observed: "It sounded like talking on a ham radio."

The response rate for the households contacted was 78 percent. The respondents were asked questions about how much they used various communication media; about their awareness of some topics that had recently been presented in the media; and about how important each of five media -- radio, newspapers, television, magazines and friends -- was to them for gratifying ten needs. The media were selected as those being most generally available in both rural and urban Alaska. Movies were excluded because they are not available in many parts of the state; books, perhaps, should have been included. The list of needs was based on those used in the 1973 Israel study by Katz, Gurevitch and Haas[28] and a more recent study by Elliott and Quattlebaum.[29] The needs statements:

I [use the medium] to . . .
1. . . . get the feeling I'm involved in important events
2. . . . pass the time.
3. . . . get to know the quality of our leaders.
4. . . . help learn about myself.
5. . . . get away from the usual cares and problems of everyday life.
6. . . . be entertained.
7. . . . overcome loneliness.
8. . . . release tension.
9. . . . keep up with the way government is doing its job.
10. . . . obtain information about daily life.

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[28] Elihu Katz, Michael Gurevitch and H. Haas, "On the Use of Mass Media for Important Things," *American Sociological Review* 38 (1973), 164-181.

[29] William R. Elliott and Cynthia P. Quattlebaum, "Similarities in Patterns of Media Use: A Cluster Analysis of Media Gratifications," *The Western Journal of Speech Communication* 43 (1979), pp. 61-72.

Question order was varied for each medium in hopes it would make the questions seem less repetitive. The questions were treated as Likert scales, with six possible answers ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. No neutral option was provided.[30]

In addition, respondents were asked which medium they preferred for getting information about state government, for programs about Alaska and Alaskans, and information such as a report about Native land claims (the Berger Commission report) which had been issued shortly before the survey was conducted.

Households rather than individuals were chosen as the units of observation because of concern that the budget for the survey was not large enough to permit random selection of adults within households. Much of the information reported, however, refers to the adult respondents from the households. These respondents were not randomly selected; however, their demographic characteristics closely resemble census information about the populations from which they were drawn.

The probability is 95 percent that figures from the rural and Anchorage subsamples are less than 10 percentage points higher or lower than the true population values. In cases where the full Alaska sample is used, the deviation from the true population value is estimated to be no more than 7 percentage points. This estimate does not take into account types of error other than sampling error that can enter into survey findings. Deviations of this size were judged to be acceptable, given the nature of the research questions being asked. Those findings which could be compared with the findings of other surveys of Alaskans fell well within these tolerances, indicating that the sample drawn was not an abnormal one.

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[30] The researched did not want to make it easy for respondents to select a category that was of no interest to him and that might reduce responses in the polar categories. Bishop found that those who selected the middle alternative would not necessarily answer the question in the same way as other respondents if forced to make a choice and that offering a middle alternative could affect conclusions about the distribution of public opinion on an issue. See George F. Bishop, "Experiments With the Middle Response Alternative in Survey Questions," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 51 (1987), pp. 220-232.

The rural and Anchorage subsamples differed in several respects. The typical respondent in Anchorage was white, lived in a household of two or three people, had lived in the city seven or eight years, and was 36 years old. Rural respondents were more likely to be members of other races, to live in larger households, to be involved in community organizations, and to have lived in their communities longer periods of time. The demographic information is

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Alaska Survey Respondents

	Anchorage	Rural Alaska
Race		
White	85%	72%
Native	6	24
Black	3	1
Other	6	3
Sex		
Male	51%	46%
Female	49	54
Age		
Mean age	36 years	40 years
Community		
Belong to organizations	47%	56%
Lived in com. entire life	3	19
More than 10 years	28	34
Mean size of household	2.91 persons	3.25 persons

consistent with 1980 census information for the state.[31] More recent population estimates for Alaska provide figures which remain within a percentage point or two of these.[32]

Media Function Findings

Despite the differences in the media environments, the responses to the ten usefulness questions indicate rural and urban Alaskans' perceptions of the functions of the media are quite similar (See Table 2). There is no difference in urban and rural Alaskans' perceptions of the functions of newspapers, magazines or friends across the entire range of usefulness questions. Rural and urban Alaskans appear to agree that newspapers are the preferred medium for information about government and daily life, and that friends are most useful in helping them to learn about themselves.

However, differences are apparent for the broadcast media, and they are most pronounced for radio.

The self-reported information about the usefulness of radio and television for Alaskans indicates that rural Alaskans were significantly (at the .05 level) more likely than urban Alaskans to find them useful for gaining information about leaders and government. Rural respondents were also significantly less likely to use radio ritualistically or for escape. However, rural respondents were no more

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[31] Bureau of the Census, *County and City Data Book 1983*, p. 21.

[32] See Economic Analysis Section, Department of Commerce and Economic Development, State of Alaska, *The Alaska Economic and Statistical Review*, 1984, and Department of Labor, State of Alaska, *Alaska Population Overview*, September 1985. Anchorage respondents in a 1985 telephone survey conducted by Belden Associates also closely resembled those in this survey. Fifty-two percent of the Belden survey respondents were male; 86 percent were white. Seven percent were homemakers, as compared to three percent in this survey. Belden Associates, "The Anchorage Continuing Market Study: Research Report Conducted for the Anchorage Daily News," 1985.

Table 2

Usefulness of media to Alaskans by rural or urban residency

		radio		TV		Newspapers		Magazines		Friends	
		urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
To get to know the quality of our leaders	strongly agree, agree	21	42	43	57	61	61	41	53	49	38
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	48	38	37	30	29	25	36	25	36	40
	disagree, strongly disagree	31	15	19	9	10	9	23	19	15	19
	N.	195		195		195		197		197	
	Chi square	13.57		6.26		22		3.89		2.05	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	at .005		at .05		NS		NS		NS	
To keep up with the way government is doing its job	strongly agree, agree	32	47	56	71	76	71	47	59	39	36
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	44	37	34	16	21	17	35	24	43	42
	disagree, strongly disagree	24	13	9	9	3	7	18	14	18	19
	N.	197		195		195		197		197	
	Chi Square	6.67		8.20		2.01		3.80		.11	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	at .05		at .025		NS		NS		NS	
To get the feeling I'm involved in important events	strongly agree, agree	26	31	29	37	49	40	23	34	43	49
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	37	34	41	29	32	35	44	31	40	27
	disagree, strongly disagree	37	30	29	30	19	20	33	32	17	21
	N.	195		195		195		197		197	
	Chi Square	1.15		2.95		.93		4.38		3.29	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	NS		NS		NS		NS		NS	

		radio		TV		Newspapers		Magazines		Friends	
		urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
To obtain information about daily life	strongly agree, agree	61	64	70	74	83	80	61	62	63	67
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	23	19	19	15	16	11	29	23	30	27
	disagree, strongly disagree	16	12	10	7	1	4	10	12	7	3
	N.	195		195		195		197		197	
	Chi Square	.89		1.08		2.71		.86		1.80	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	NS		NS		NS		NS		NS	
To help learn about myself	strongly agree, agree	17	12	19	21	27	15	40	31	54	54
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	37	41	43	37	38	42	34	33	32	31
	disagree, strongly disagree	46	42	37	38	35	38	26	33	14	12
	N.	195		195		195		197		197	
	Chi Square	1.12		.52		3.65		1.44		.13	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	NS		NS		NS		NS		NS	
To pass the time	strongly agree, agree	58	34	57	58	20	20	41	41	69	71
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	29	37	31	22	58	48	45	39	23	19
	disagree, strongly disagree	13	24	11	16	22	27	14	17	8	7
	N.	195		195		195		197		197	
	Chi Square	10.42		2.40		1.29		.64		.44	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	at .01		NS		NS		NS		NS	
To get away from the usual cares and problems of everyday life	strongly agree, agree	43	24	38	29	5	4	27	25	44	45
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	31	28	43	37	35	34	42	43	38	36
	disagree, strongly disagree	25	43	18	30	60	57	31	29	18	16
	N.	194		195		195		197		197	
	Chi Square	10.22		4.66		.07		.10		.12	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	at .01		NS		NS		NS		NS	

		radio		TV		Newspapers		Magazines		Friends	
		urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural	urban	rural
To release tension	strongly agree, agree	40	25	27	20	7	6	15	17	63	57
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	42	35	41	42	33	33	51	41	24	28
	disagree, strongly disagree	18	35	31	34	60	56	34	39	13	12
	N.	195		195		195		197		197	
	Chi Square	9.49		1.14		.07		1.55		.61	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	at .01		NS		NS		NS		NS	
To overcome loneliness	strongly agree, agree	22	20	19	20	8	3	15	13	55	59
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	37	35	44	36	32	28	51	36	28	27
	disagree, strongly disagree	41	40	36	40	60	64	34	48	12	11
	N.	195		195		195		197		197	
	Chi Square	.04		.99		2.61		5.12		.02	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	NS		NS		NS		NS		NS	
To be entertained	strongly agree, agree	88	73	85	79	40	26	72	62	73	70
	slightly agree, slightly disagree	11	20	13	14	37	45	22	25	23	20
	disagree, strongly disagree	1	3	1	3	23	24	6	10	4	7
	N.	196		195		195		197		197	
	Chi Square	4.84		1.15		3.63		1.86		1.07	
	Significance (2 degrees of freedom)	NS		NS		NS		NS		NS	

likely than urban respondents to regard radio as a source of information about daily life.

Table 3 summarizes the information from the first four questions, which are grouped here as indicators of media usefulness for surveillance of the environment. It shows that rural Alaskans and Anchorage respondents agree newspapers are the most useful and radio the least useful medium. Despite this overall agreement on the surveillance functions of the various media, there are substantial differences between the rural and urban groups. The differences are consistent with the expectation that newspapers would be seen as less useful and the broadcast media as more useful in rural Alaska than in Anchorage. The biggest difference in perception -- again as predicted -- is for radio, with a rural mean of 46 and an Anchorage mean of 35.

Differences in rural and urban Alaskans' perceptions of the entertainment/escape functions were less marked. Rural respondents were significantly less likely to use radio for entertainment or escape, as indicated by their answers to the last five questions in Table 2, but differences in perceptions of the entertainment/escape functions of the other media were slight.

Table 3

Agree, Strongly Agree Media Useful for Surveillance of Environment by Urban, Rural Residency

	Rural Mean*	Urban Mean
newspapers	63	67.25
radio	46	35
television	56.75	49.5
magazines	52	43
friends	47.5	48.5

***Figures are means of the first four questions in Table 2.**

Table 4 shows the means for the entertainment/escape questions. While half of the Anchorage respondents agreed or strongly agreed that radio is useful for entertainment/escape, only a third of the rural respondents held that view.

Table 4

Agree, Strongly Agree Media Useful for Entertainment/ Escape by Urban, Rural Residency

	Rural Mean*	Urban Mean
newspapers	11.8	16
radio	35.2	50.2
television	41.2	45.2
magazines	31.6	34
friends	58.4	60.8

***Figures are means of the last five questions in Table 2.**

A final set of questions provided information relevant to the two media function research questions. While the other attitude questions were used to measure respondents' perceptions of the utility of the media available to them, these questions were asked to determine how respondents would prefer to receive several types of information (Table 5). These questions were intended to permit comparison of perceived media functions with preferred media functions. They gave rural respondents a way of indicating whether they found the available media deficient.

The respondents were asked how they would prefer to receive different kinds of material such as information about the state government, a report on a policy issue of statewide interest and programs about Alaska and Alaskans. The similarities in preferences between the rural and Anchorage respondents are in

Table 5

Preferred Sources of Information

	Rural	Anchorage
Preferred medium for information about state government		
Television	39%	28%
Radio	22	16
Newspapers	26	43
Other	13	13
N =	100	100
$\chi^2 = 6.92$ with 3 df significant at .10		
Preferred medium for information such as the Berger commission report		
Television	25%	32%
Radio	16	10
Newspapers	42	42
Other	16	15
N =	91	99
$\chi^2 = 2.28$ with 3 df nonsignificant		
Preferred medium for programs about Alaska and Alaskans		
TV	74%	78%
VCR	9	7
Radio	17	15
N =	91	99
$\chi^2 = .54$ with 2 df nonsignificant		

most cases more striking than the differences. Both rural and Anchorage residents preferred newspapers (followed by television and radio in that order) for information on the statewide policy issue. Three-quarters of the respondents in both groups preferred television to radio for programs about Alaska and Alaskans. This suggests that, despite differences they perceived in the media they use, they were largely in agreement on what the functions of the media should be.

The one exception is in the medium preferred for information about state government. When asked about the usefulness of media in providing information about the way government is doing its job, rural respondents gave television and newspapers equally high rankings while Anchorage residents indicated newspapers were most useful (Table 2, Question 2). This difference was evident again when respondents were asked which medium they would prefer to get information about state government from (Table 5). Anchorage residents clearly preferred newspapers , whereas rural residents clearly preferred television. This appears to reflect the content available to the two subpopulations. Many rural Alaskans were accustomed to watching a half-hour legislative roundup program every evening during Legislative sessions on the only TV channel available to them. The program was available on public television to Anchorage residents, too; but they had alternatives: local newspapers for information about state government, and commercial channels for different kinds of TV programming.

Rural and urban Alaskans, the findings indicate, essentially see the media in the same way. Despite the scarcity of newspapers, rural respondents agree with Anchorage respondents that newspapers are the most useful source of information and that television and radio are most useful for entertainment. The differences in media functions as indicated by Tables 2 through 5 are differences of degree. Rural respondents are more likely than their urban counterparts to find radio and television useful for information and less likely to regard radio as a medium for entertainment/escape.

Knowledge Gap Findings

Rural Alaskans, it appears, have adjusted their expectations of the media to reflect the limitations of their media system. But have they succeeded in compensating for these limitations? Can they get the information they need in an environment that offers a limited number of media and few choices of channels within media? Are these apparent limitations real? Or have the rural Alaskans simply escaped information overload along with other aspects of urban life?

The preliminary answers to Research Questions Three through Five rest largely on the responses to questions about awareness of four topics that had been covered by Alaskan media in the months immediately before the survey. Each of the topics was an Alaskan event or issue of statewide interest. Two of the topics were scheduled events, the third was an archaeological find on Alaska's North Slope, and the fourth was the issuance of a report in a continuing controversy over Native claims to Alaskan land.

About the same number of rural and urban respondents had viewed a one-hour television program about the archaeological dig (43 of the 100 rural respondents and 41 of the 100 Anchorage respondents). But more rural respondents than Anchorage respondents had watched programs about the Inupiat Circumpolar Conference in Kotzebue three months earlier (30 rural, 6 Anchorage respondents), the Native Youth Olympics held in Anchorage six months earlier (48 rural to 35 Anchorage) and were aware of the Berger report on Native land claims (35 rural respondents, 27 Anchorage respondents). These differences may be explained by differences in interest in these topics between rural and urban Alaskans. Of those who didn't watch the conference, 31 percent of rural respondents as opposed to 22 percent of Anchorage respondents said they would have watched if more of it had been televised.

Greater awareness of these issues by Anchorage residents would have been evidence that the rural communication system was inadequate. This is apparently not the case. However, depth of knowledge was not measured. If it had been, it is possible that the rural Alaskans who were aware of these subjects might not have proved as knowledgeable as urban Alaskans. This is an issue that deserves further study.

The nature of these topics suggests that demographic characteristics such as race, rural/urban residency and length of residency would be associated with awareness. Some relationships were, in fact, found (see Table 6). Rural residents were significantly more likely to have watched the Native Olympics and programs about the Inupiat Circumpolar Conference. It might be expected that demographic variables would be less strongly related to awareness in the media-poor environment, but that was found to be true for only one of the topics: awareness of the Berger Commission report about Native land claims. Three demographic characteristics were related to awareness of the Berger report for Anchorage residents; none were for rural Alaskans. (All three -- age, length of residence and occupation -- might be taken as indicators of interest in a subject that is more complex than the other three awareness topics.)

Race/ethnicity was a possible explanation for observed differences in awareness between rural and urban Alaskans because each of the topics had a racial aspect, and Natives comprise a larger part of the population in rural Alaska than in Anchorage (24 percent of rural respondents as compared with 6 percent of Anchorage respondents). [33] Table 6 shows that nonwhites were more likely than other rural residents to be aware of two of the topics (but, surprisingly, not the Native Olympics), but race wasn't related to awareness for Anchorage respondents. [34]

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[33] 27.7 percent of rural respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that radio is useful for information about government were Native, compared with 20.8 percent of the other rural respondents.

[34] However, the low level of awareness of the circumpolar conference among Anchorage respondents precluded finding strong relationships between the demographic variables and awareness for that question. It should be noted , too, that race was a nominal level, nonlinear variable. It was better suited to the rural subsample where Natives comprised the bulk of the nonwhite respondents than to the Anchorage subsample.

Table 6

Correlations Between Topic Awareness and Demographic Characteristics

Conference	Saw ICC Olympics	Saw Native Berger	Aware of documentary	Saw Barrow
rural/urban residency	.312***	.117*	.087	.02
N = 200				
Rural respondents				
Race	.257**	.08	.088	.24**
Age	.151	.143	.134	.34***
Sex	.184*	.157	.131	.164
Length of residency	.158	.03	.093	.133
Memberships	.053	.126	.037	.144
Occupation	.085	.057	.191*	.184*
N = 100				
Anchorage respondents				
Race	.026	-.079	.003	-.131
Age	.114	.095	.279**	.31***
Sex	.079	-.13	.085	.01
Length of residency	.115	.053	.266**	.107
Memberships	.015	.135	.152	.149
Occupation	-.046	-.022	.231*	.161
N = 100				

Spearman *rho*

***Significant at the .05 level.** ****Significant at the .01 level.**
*****Significant at the .001 level.**

Positive correlation for residency is rural; for race, nonwhite; for sex, male; for membership, belongs to organization(s); for occupation, high-status occupation (range is from executive/managerial to unemployed).

Basic demographic variables such as race, sex and age can be taken as indicators of reasons why respondents might be interested in a topic. To some extent this is true for the other variables, too. But length of residence, memberships and occupation are also indicators of the individual's place in the community and, as such, can be indicators of access to information. That is how education has been used in knowledge gap research. Research Questions Three and Four, the ones about knowledge gaps within the different media environments, carry with them the expectation that knowledge gaps will be greater in the more complex system. Thus, community-related variables would be expected to be more closely related to awareness in Anchorage than in rural Alaska. The findings, however, are no more than suggestive. Table 6 shows that the community-related variables were more strongly related to Anchorage respondents' than rural respondents' awareness of the Berger report. But there were no such links between the community-related variables and awareness of the other three topics. For rural Alaskans, as expected, the basic demographic variables were more often related to awareness than were the variables that hinted at the individual's place in the community.

One of the topics had been introduced in the print media. This was the Berger Commission report that was first issued as book. While Anchorage residents were most likely to have gotten information about the report from newspapers, the rural Alaskans were equally likely to have gotten information from television, radio and newspapers. The number of respondents aware of the report is too small to support many generalizations, but this does indicate that rural Alaskans were at least as likely as urban Alaskans to be aware of information of interest to them. It also supports the finding that rural Alaskans regarded television and radio as more useful information sources than did Anchorage residents.

Topic awareness was also found to be related to attitudes about the usefulness of radio for rural Alaskans, though not for Anchorage residents. This, too, supports conclusions, in response to Research Questions One and Two, that the media function differently in the two subsystems, with rural radio taking on some of the information function of newspapers. Consistent with other studies that have found stronger linkages between gratifications sought and outcomes than between media use and outcomes, [35] it was found that awareness of the Berger report among rural Alaskans was more strongly related to use of radio to keep up with how government is doing its job (Spearman *rho* correlation of .248; significant at .01) than it was to amount of use of radio (.095; nonsignificant) or of newspapers (.056; nonsignificant). However, this relationship was not found for Anchorage residents who said they found radio useful for keeping up with government (-.015). [36] This suggests that radio has succeeded in assuming some of the functions of newspapers in rural Alaska but not in Anchorage. And it also suggests, in response to research Question Five, that those who rely on radio rather than newspapers in Anchorage might suffer from knowledge gaps.

Radio Users in Different Contexts

The findings of the previous sections point to radio as the medium that is key to understanding the research questions in this study, questions about both media functions and about knowledge gaps. This section, then, looks more closely at radio users in rural Alaska and Anchorage.

The first four of the questions listed on page 12 were used to measure the usefulness of various media in meeting the surveillance needs of rural and urban Alaskans. Previous studies have found that newspapers are regarded as the best media source for the types of information indicated in three of these questions ("to get to know the quality of our leaders," "To keep up with the way government is doing its job," and "to obtain information about daily life).[37] While the Alaskan respondents agreed that newspapers were the most useful medium for these types of information, rural respondents were found to be more likely than Anchorage residents to perceive radio as a source of useful information. Strong correlations among these variables for radio surveillance usefulness were found in the Alaska survey and are shown in Table 7.

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[35] For example, McLeod, Bybee and Durall found stronger correlations between gratifications sought and gratifications obtained than between exposure and gratifications obtained. Jack M. McLeod, Carl R. Bybee and Jean A. Durall, "Evaluating Media Performance by Gratifications Sought and Received," *Journalism Quarterly* 59 (Spring 1982), pp. 10-12.

[36] The other Spearman *rho* correlations for Anchorage respondents: amount of use of radio and aware of the Berger report (-.015), subscribe to newspaper and aware of Berger report (.065).

Table 7

Correlations Among Measures of Radio Surveillance Usefulness

use radio to . . .	know about leaders	info about daily life	to feel involved	keep up with govt.
know about leaders	1.000			
info. about daily life	0.332	1.000		
feel involved	0.462	0.326	1.000	
keep up with govt.	0.417	0.417	0.164	1.000

N = 194

Spearman *rho*

All correlations of .25 or higher are significant at the .001 level; the other correlations are significant at the .01 level.

Nearly half of the rural respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with the proposition that radio is useful to them in keeping up "with the way government is doing its job." Because of this question's high correlation with the other information questions, those who agreed with it were examined more closely as representative of Alaskans who find radio useful in meeting information needs: the active radio users.

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[37] Newspaper uses identified by Bernard Berelson in his study of readers during the 1945 New York newspaper strike included for information about and interpretation of public affairs, as a tool for daily living, and for social contact. Bernard Berelson, "What 'Missing the Newspaper' Means," *Communications Research 1948-49*, Paul Lazarsfeld and Frank Stanton, eds.; New York: Harper, 1949. Reprint Edition, New York: Arno Press, 1979, pp. 40-47. Penn Kimball replicated Berelson's study 10 years later during another New York newspaper strike. One of the respondents said -- ironically, given the focus of the present study -- "I might as well be in Alaska, I feel so cut off." Penn Kimball, "People Without Papers," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 23 (1959), p. 391.

Knowledge gap questions that can be asked about the active rural radio users include: In what ways do they differ from other rural respondents? Do they seem better informed than other rural respondents? Do they resemble urban newspaper readers? How do they compare with urban respondents who answered this question in the same way?

Table 8

Alaskans' Media Use by How Useful They Find Radio for Information About Government

	Rural		Anchorage		
	radio useful	other	radio useful	other	Sample
hours listening to radio (mean)	**2.36**	**1.98**	**3.53**	**2.43**	**2.47**
t-value	.41		1.79		
significance	NS		Sig. at .05		
hours watching TV	**2.53**	**2.34**	**2.28**	**2.41**	**2.40**
t-value	.62		.33		
significance	NS		NS		
subscribe to local newspaper	**34%**	**24.5%**	**81.2%**	**80.9%**	**55%**
t-value	1.04		.04		
significance	NS		NS		
N =	**47**	**53**	**32**	**68**	**200**

t-test values are one-tailed probabilities.

Rural Alaskans who found radio useful in keeping up with government did use all the media more than did the other rural respondents (Table 8) though the differences were not statistically significant. Anchorage respondents who found radio useful did not exhibit such a consistent pattern. While they listened to the radio significantly more than did other Anchorage respondents, they spent slightly less time watching television and were equally likely to subscribe to newspapers. Rural respondents who found radio useful in keeping up with government did spend considerably less time than their urban counterparts listening to the radio. The number of respondents in both rural groups who subscribe to newspapers was only slightly above the figure for all rural respondents, perhaps underscoring the difficulty of getting newspapers in rural Alaska.

Table 9

Demographics by Usefulness of Radio for Information About Government

	Rural		Anchorage	
	radio useful	other	radio useful	other
Belong to organizations	**66%**	**47.2**	**62.5%**	**39.7%**
t-value	1.90		2.16	
significance	Sig. at .05		Sig. at .05	
Mean Length of residency*	**(5.7)**	**(5.4)**	**(4.55)**	**(4.68)**
t-value			.67	27
significance	NS		NS	
Mean Age	**44.4**	**37.3**	**39**	**34.3**
t-value	2.23		2.18	
significance	Sig. at .05		Sig. at .05	
N	47	50	32	68

***These figures are not directly equivalent to years. 4 = 5 to 6 years; 5 = 7 to 8 years; 6 = 9 to 10 years.**

T-test values are one-tailed probabilities.

Many studies have linked newspaper readership to community involvement. Lain, for example, found "persons who were older, better educated, are more highly integrated into the community and had a higher surveillance need were those most likely to read a newspaper." [38] If radio is substituting for newspapers in rural Alaska, use of radio to get information should be related to community involvement. The best indicator of community involvement in this survey was a question about membership in organizations. Length of residency was a second indicator. Four-fifths of the Anchorage respondents who said radio is useful for monitoring government also subscribed to newspapers, whereas this was true of only a third of the rural respondents. It would seem more likely then that urban respondents would exhibit characteristics usually linked with newspaper readers. While the Anchorage respondents did indeed exhibit these characteristics, they did not do so to a greater extent than the rural residents.

The active radio users were significantly higher in almost all the community-related variables than were the other respondents in their subgroups (Table 9). Rural and Anchorage respondents who found radio useful for information about government were significantly more likely to belong to organizations and they were somewhat older on average than respondents who didn't find radio useful. Neither group differed significantly from its subsample in mean length of residency. Rural respondents in general were likely to have lived in their area longer -- between 8 and 9 years compared with 6 to 7 years for Anchorage respondents.

The key knowledge gap question remains, however: How much do rural Alaskans who regard radio as an important source of information really know?

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[38] Laurence B. Lain, "Steps Toward A Comprehensive Model of Newspaper Readership," *Journalism Quarterly* Vol. 63 (Spring 1986), pp. 69-74, 121.

Table 10

Awareness of Alaskan Topics

	Rural			Anchorage		
	radio useful	other	newspaper	radio useful	other	newspaper
Saw ICC	36.2%	26%	34.5%	6.3%	5.9%	6.6%
t-value	1.27			.07		
significance	NS			NS		
Watched Native Olympics	54.3	46	44.8	34.4	35.3	36.8
t-value	.97			.02		
significance	NS			NS		
Saw Barrow TV program	48.9	38	55.2	40.6	41.2	46.1
t-value	1.13			.05		
significance	NS			NS		
Know of Berger report	51.1	22*	41.4	28.1	26.5	26.3
t-value	3.31			.17		
significance	Sig. at 001			NS		
N =	47	53	29	32	68	76

If rural Alaskans are using the radio in place of newspapers as an information medium, one would expect them not only to be more aware of issues than are Anchorage listeners but also more aware than other rural Alaskans. This was, in fact, the case for all four of the awareness questions (Table 10). The difference in awareness was greatest for the topic that had been introduced in the print media, the Berger Commission report. The Anchorage radio listeners were not so easily distinguished from the other Anchorage respondents. In fact, in three of the four cases the mean differed from the Anchorage subsample mean by less than a percentage point. Awareness for active Anchorage radio users was lower than awareness for active Anchorage newspaper users on three of the four topics though the differences were small. The reverse was true for rural respondents. A higher percentage of active radio users than active newspaper users was aware of three of the four topics in rural Alaska, and the difference was nearly 10 percentage points for two of the topics.

Thus radio appears to have been more useful for rural respondents than Anchorage respondents. It proved even more useful than newspapers for rural respondents. While the differences among the Anchorage active media groups are too small to provide a clear answer to the research question about knowledge gaps related to media choices, they do suggest that further investigation of this question might find such differences.

Conclusion

The picture that emerges from the survey findings, while blurry in spots, is of two media systems whose components have somewhat different functions and of active rural radio users who are more successful than their urban counterparts in obtaining information. These active radio users stand out just as clearly from rural Alaskans who do not use radio so purposefully for information gathering. Though they may be media poor they do not appear on a first examination to be information poor. They use other media as well as radio, but not to a greater extent than other rural residents. Active radio users in Anchorage, in contrast, are almost indistinguishable from other Anchorage residents.

Reported attitudes toward the media and awareness of topics covered in the media support the conclusion in response to Research Questions One and Two that the media do have different functions in rural Alaska than in Anchorage. The broadcast media, particularly radio, appear to have appropriated surveillance functions of the absent daily newspapers. Policy decisions only hinted at in this paper appear to have given the rural broadcast media the capability of meeting surveillance needs.

Knowledge gaps were found in response to Research Questions Three and Four. However, the knowledge gaps in the media-rich system that were the subject of Research Question Five were not found. The only substantial knowledge gaps that were related to perceptions of media usefulness were found in the media-poor system. Other questions about knowledge gaps in media-poor and media-rich environments remain because depth of knowledge was not measured and because the topics chosen may have been of greater interest to rural residents.

To the extent that media-oriented and audience-oriented views of communication behavior have grown apart since Katz, Gurevitch and Haas looked at media functions and audience preferences nearly 20 years ago, they have opened up an area in which interesting questions await examination. Knowledge gap research, which in recent years has turned toward study of the effects of media and community structural variables on knowledge gaps, has moved into this area.

The popularity of diffusion of innovations and uses and gratifications research in the 1980s reflects recognition of change in the communication environment. New media such as videotex and VCRs emerge, old media change and we wonder about the consequences. To see these most clearly it would seem appropriate to examine media functions and the needs of audiences (and their social systems) together, to consider whether the activity of audiences is limited to selection of content – or if it is not also influencing the evolution of old media and the development of new ones. It appears that this has happened in Alaska.

INFLUENCE OF CHAIN OWNERSHIP ON WIRE SERVICE USAGE

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INFLUENCE OF CHAIN OWNERSHIP ON WIRE SERVICE USAGE

By F. Dennis Hale*

In a volume provocatively subtitled "How Chain Management Corrupted America's Oldest Newspaper," Andrew Kreig compared the Hartford, Conn., Courant under local and chain ownership. Kreig was a staff reporter for the newspaper for ten years while it was locally owned and for five years after it was purchased by the prestigious newspaper group, Times Mirror.

The author's avowed purpose in the book was to document the "sudden, pervasive onslaught of abusive practices in Hartford" which followed chain ownership.[1] He described how the new management emphasized "more entertainment, more opinion--and far less local news."[2] He concluded that a new "emphasis on bright writing overshadowed development of sources and careful documentation of the facts."[3] He reported that central Hartford news was cut and that suburban news was strengthened. And Kreig complained, "At the top editorial levels of the paper, nobody knew much about Connecticut."[4]

But Kreig also reported that under Times Mirror ownership that the Hartford newspaper strengthened its Washington bureau and its business section,[5] improved its photography and graphics, won an unprecedented number of reporting prizes, and experienced circulation gains.[6]

The reader is left with the impression that the benefits of Times Mirror ownership may have equaled--and even outweighed--the disadvantages of the change of ownership.

Such ambivalent conclusions are commonplace in the research literature about the impact of chain ownership upon newspapers. Some studies show that chains harm the quality of newspapers, and a few studies show that chains improve newspapers; but most studies show that ownership has little effect.

With that in mind, a carefully controlled statistical analysis was designed to measure the impact of chain ownership upon one measure of the quality of daily newspapers--the number and type of wire services that a newspaper purchases. These wire services determine the quality and quantity of news that is available to a newspaper about other regions of the state, state government, the federal government, the nation, and the world. Wire service usage was compared for 180 newspapers for two time periods. For time one, usage was compared for 60 independent papers, 60 matched chain papers and 60 matched independent papers about to be purchased by chains. For time two, usage was compared for the same 60 independent, 60 chain and 60 papers that had changed from independent to chain. The times of analysis were one year before a change of ownership and five years after such a change.

Review of Literature

Literature reviews about the impact of chain ownership upon the quality of newspapers conclude that a few studies indicate advantages and some studies indicate disadvantages. But the majority of studies indicate no effect--a balancing of advantages and disadvantages.[7]

Two studies that identified advantages were Becker et al. and Demers and Wackman. Becker conducted a secondary analysis of the New England Daily Newspaper Study of 1973 in which media professionals rated the quality of 109 papers in one geographic region. Becker found a significant .34 correlation between the size of a newspaper chain that a newspaper belonged to and the quality of press performance. He concluded: "Despite the high value assigned to independent ownership...it is misplaced."[8] A shortcoming of the study was its focus on New England where the history of newspapers, ownership, competition and demographics are quite different from other regions of the country.

The Demers and Wackman survey of 404 newspaper editors found no differences between chain and independent papers on whether the paper had conducted a poll to provide information for a news story. However, there was a difference between chain and independent editors concerning plans to use such polls in the future. Some 37 percent of chain editors planned such polls, versus 27 percent of independent editors. However, this difference only existed for medium-sized papers of 25,000 to 100,000 circulation--not for small or large papers. This difference in the verbalized intent of editors to conduct a poll in the future for one size of newspapers demonstrated a modest difference at best.

At least three studies have identified deterioration in news quality that is associated with chain ownership. One of the most startling was the Donohue et al. analysis of 83 county seat newspapers in Minnisota. The study analyzed the reporting of conflict in local public affairs in 1965 and 1979. Papers owned locally were compared with papers owned by persons out-of-state; this was almost the same as comparing independently and chain-owned papers. The authors discovered that during the 14 years that the locally owned papers increased their reporting of conflict by one-third, and the out-of-state owned papers decreased their conflict coverage by one-half. The authors concluded that "these findings strongly suggest that the form of ownership has had an impact on local reporting of government issues."[9] A limitation of the study was that it focused on newspapers from one state, that it included no metropolitan dailies, and that three-fourths of the papers in the sample were weeklies and not dailies.

Adverse effects of chain ownership also were identified in Thrift's analysis of editorials in 24 West Coast dailies. The study compared the editorial vigor of 8 papers that remained independent between 1960 and 1975 and 16 that chainged from independent to chain ownership. In 1960 the editorials in the two groups of independent papers were the same. In 1975, however, 8 percent of the editorials in the papers purchased by chains were classified as argumentative, controversial and local, contrasted to 18 percent of the editorials in the independent papers. The author concluded that "certainly, the (chain) impact is not helpful to readers who seek guidance on local matters when they turn to the editorial pages of their daily newspapers."[10] An obvious weakness of the Thrift study was that it was restricted to West Coast newspapers.

One study with a nation-wide scope has identified an adverse influence of chains. In an analysis of 101 metropolitan dailies Litman and Bridges found that the number of newspapers in a chain was negatively associated with the number of news services subscribed to, the size of the news staff, and the amount of news. The authors concluded that "The negative influence of chain size on staff size might suggest that those newspapers with the financial ability to provide higher quality through larger staffs do not provide it when given the freedom to do so. Neither does it appear that chain ownership substitutes additional wire services for the lost personnel."[11] One limitation of the study was that it focused on metropolitan dailies with a mean circulation of 209,000. This compared to a mean circulation of 36,000 for all U.S. daily newspapers.

Most numerous in the literature about chain ownership are studies that identify either no impact or a mixture of positive and negative impacts. At least seven studies fall in this category. The seminal one was Grotta's analysis of 40 papers that changed from independent to chain with 114 that remained independent or chain during the years, 1950 to 1968. Grotta used a variety of surrogates for newspaper quality including size of editorial staff, size of news hole, percentage of local news, size of editorial page news hole, and percentage of editorials as content. The author found no differences between chain and independent newspapers and concluded that: "If there are indeed significant economic efficiencies from larger scale operation in the industry, this study indicates that those benefits are not being passed on to the consumer."[12] In other words, chain newspapers are not inferior to independents; but they are not superior either.

Daugherty compared the editorial pages and front pages of 36 chain and 32 independent dailies and found almost no differences for such content categories as local photos, wire photos, features, local news, state news. Chain papers published slightly more letters to the editor, and editorials about local issues.[13] The study does not report the comparative circulation sizes of the two samples of newspapers. It is possible that the chain papers were larger and this could have accounted for the differences in the editorial pages.

Null findings also were reported in three other studies by Drew and Wilhoit, Rystrom, and Hale. Drew and Wilhoit surveyed 149 managing editors and found no difference between chain and independent papers in the method for determining the size of the news hole and the categories of local news selected.[14] Rystrom analyzed editorial endorsements by 51 California dailies for the period, 1970 to 1980, and found few differences between chain and independent papers in the number or impact of the endorsements.[15] And Hale analyzed the editorial pages of 28 dailies before and after their purchase by chains and found no difference for variables such as liberal columnists or cartoonists, local editorials, letters to the editors, local columns or number of editorial pages.[16]

All of the above studies are quantitative. It is noteworthy that a similar null finding emerged in a qualitative analysis of the same question. Ghiglione's book, The Buying and Selling of America's Newspapers, consisted of ten case studies of newspapers purchased by chains. The ten case studies fall into three categories. Three papers improved under chain ownership, three remained about the same, and four deteriorated.[17] Thus Ghiglione's qualitative study had the same conclusion as the quantitative studies by Grotta and others. Apparently chain ownership does not make much of a difference in the performance of daily newspapers.

Methodology

This study used the number of wire services that a newspaper subscribed to as a surrogate for the quality of the newspaper. This same measure was used in a 1975 study of competing dailies in 23 cities that was conducted by Weaver and Mullins.[18] The authors made a distinction between major or comprehensive news services such as Associated Press and United Press International, and supplemental news services such as New York Times News Service and Copley News Service. That same distinction was made in this study. More recently, Litman and Bridges analyzed news services used by 101 metropolitan dailies. The authors indicated that news services, along with size of news staff and size of news hole, were three variables that "reappeared in the research literature as financial indicators of a newspaper's commitment to quality performance."[19]

All of the chain papers in this study came from medium or large chains with six or more papers. Numerous researchers have emphasized chain size in their studies and have departed from the practice of classifying all chain newspapers together, whether the chains include 2 ot 85 papers. Daugherty focused on chains with 10 or more newspapers, and Hale examined chains with six or more papers.[20] Becker and Beam compared independent papers with those in small and large chains, and Litman and Bridges treated chain ownership as a continuous variable determined by the number of papers in the chain.[21] And Blankenberg and Busterna conducted studies that compared the performance of papers in the giant Gannett chain with independent and other chain papers.[22]

This focus on medium and large chains is further justified by 1986 statistics about daily newspaper ownership that were compiled by Busterna. The mean size of newspaper chains reached 9.1 in 1986 after remaining at 5 for several decades. This unprecedented growth in chain size was accompanied by other changes in newspaper ownership:

--The number of chains, which peaked at 169 in 1978, dropped as large chains absorbed small chains. In 1986 there were 127 chains.

--Absentee ownership of newspapers increased along with chain ownership.

--In 1986 the four largest newspaper chains controlled an unprecedented 24.8 percent of total daily circulation.

--And in 1986 the ten largest newspaper chains controlled a record 43.1 percent of total newspaper circulation.

It is not surprising that Busterna concluded that the future portends "continuing consolidation of daily newspapers into the hands of a small number of distant firms."[23]

Sampling started with the selection of 60 changed newspapers, which were daily newspapers that had changed from independent to chain ownership in recent years. The pool of changed papers was created from the list of newspaper ownership changes that appeared in Editor and Publisher in January, from 1976 to 1984. For an ownership change reported in 1976, for example, data on the newspaper was obtained from Editor and Publisher Year Book for one year before the ownership change and for five years after the change. An ownership change reported in January 1976 actually occurred in 1975. This resulted in the selection of data from the 1974 and 1981 yearbooks. These changed papers were selected from as many different states and chains as possible.

Each of the changed dailies was matched with an independent and a chain paper from the same region and of the same size. For example, the Redlands, Calif., Daily Facts, which was purchased by the Donrey Media Group in 1981, was matched with the independent Union Democrat in Sonora, Calif., and Freedom Newspapers' Recorder in Porterville, Calif. The weekday circulation of the papers in 1980 was 8,000 for Sonora, 8,000 for Redlands and 10,200 for Porterville.

For each newspaper the following data was obtained from yearbooks six years apart: weekday circulation, Sunday circulation, weekly subscription price, advertising line price and wire services subscribed to (Associated Press, United Press International, Los Angeles Times-Washington Post, New York Times, Gannett News Service, Christian Science Monitor, Knight Ridder, Reuters News Agency, and other news services). Also coded was whether a news service was from the paper's own chain. Additional wire service variables that were created using recoding were: total number of wire services, number of major wire services (AP plus UPI), and net wire services (total wire services minus own wire service).

T-tests were used to compare changes in the 180 dailies for the six years between time one and time two, and analysis of variance was used to compare differences between the three types of papers at time one and time two. ANOVA also was used to compare changes in variables between times one and two for the three types of papers. For example, the test determined if there were differences between the three types of papers in changes in the total number of wire services subscribed to in time one and time two.

Two-tailed tests of significance were used for the T-tests between pairs of variables for time one and two. This was because of uncertainty about the direction of changes for the 180 papers. Two-thirds of the papers were changed and chain papers. In the interest of economy such papers could either increase or decrease the number of wire services. Money might be saved by economizing in the number of wire services. Or it might be saved by replacing local staff members with additional wire services, or increasing the number of wires services.

Results

The sample of 180 paper represented 28 chains. Twelve chains had papers in both the changed and chain subsamples, six had papers in the changed subsample only, and ten had papers in the chain subsample only. The most papers represented by a chain were Gannett, 17; Thomson, 17; and Freedom, 11, followed by a number of chains with seven papers.

The papers came from 38 states. States represented by more than ten papers were: California, 14; Georgia, 10; North Carolina, 15; Pennsylvania, 14; Texas, 10. The year 1979 was the mean for time one, 1985 for time two.

Table 1 reports the mean differences for the 180 papers for time one and time two. Three news services--Christian Science Monitor, Knight Ridder and Reuters--which reached the fewest number of newspapers and which remained unchanged from time one to time two, were excluded from this and subsequent statistical analyses.

The data reflects the sluggishness of circulation during the 1980s, the time of the study. Mean daily circulation, which was 26,908 in time one, did not increase significantly. However, Sunday circulation, subscription prices and advertising prices did increase significantly. Wire services that increased significantly were Associated Press and Gannett. Newspapers that subscribed to their own wire service also increased significantly, as did newspapers that subscribed to wire services other than the eight included in the study. UPI decreased significantly; this also was true of major wire services, the variable which included UPI. Los Angeles Times and New York Times services did not change.

The total number of wire services increased significantly from 1.59 to 1.74 per paper. However, most of this was caused by newspapers subscribing to their own chain's service. Net wire services, which was total wire services minus wire services from a paper's own chain, did not increase.

Table 2 indicates the differences between the three types of papers--changed, chain and independent--during the two time periods. There were only two significant differences for the 14 variables for time one. Chain papers charged significantly more for a one-week subscription--$1.02 versus .89 and .93. And chain papers--not surprisingly--were more likely to subscribe to their own wire service. But the three types of papers were the same in all other wire service variables.

Similar patterns existed at time two. Changed papers (which were now chain) and chain papers--again not surprisingly--were more likely than independent papers to use their own wire service. And chain papers continued to charge more for subscriptions. The only other significanct difference was for the Gannett News Service which reached similar numbers of chain and changed papers but not independent papers.

Table 3 reports changes for variables from time one to time two for the three types of newspapers. First, there were no significance differences in the amount of change for circulation totals or for subscription or advertising prices for the three types of newspapers. There were no significant differences for most of the wire variables such as total wires, other wires, major wires, AP, UPI, NYT and LAT. The only changes resulted in an increase in the use of their own wire services by chain and changed papers. This also was reflected in a significant increase in the use of Gannett, and significant decreases in net number of wire services.

This study compared chain and independent newspapers in their use of wire services. Comparisons were made in three different ways. First, a sample of changed papers which were about to be sold was compared to matched samples of independent and chain papers. Second, the changed papers were compared five years after joining chains with matched samples of chain and independent papers. Thirdly, changes made over a six-year period were compared for the three types of papers.

Chain papers simply were not different from independent papers. If chains increase or decrease wire service usage to save money, it was not detected in this carefully controlled study which allowed five years for chain ownership to have an impact. Chain and independent papers behaved identically in the total number of wires services, major wire services, and even prestige supplemental wire services such as New York Times and Los Angeles Times. The only difference between the two types of newspapers was that chain were more likely to subscribe to their organization's own wire service. Using this fact, chain papers could only be judged inferior to independent papers if chain-owned news services are judges inferior to other news services. If Gannett News Service and Copley News Service are innately inferior to such independent news services as Newspaper Enterprises Association and Christian Science Monitor, then chain-owned papers are weaker news products than independent papers. But I do not think you can support such a qualitative conclusion.

FOOTNOTES

*The author is a professor and director in the School of Mass Communication at ________ ________ University. This study was made possible by a summer research grant from the ____ Faculty Research Committee.

[1] Andrew Kreig, Spiked: How Chain Management Corrupted America's Oldest Newspaper (Old Saybrook, Conn.: Peregrine Press, 1987), page 15.

[2] Ibid., page 63.

[3] Ibid., page 75.

[4] Ibid., page 92.

[5] Ibid., page 64.

[6] Ibid., page 184.

[7] F. Dennis Hale, "Editorial Diversity and Concentration," in Robert G. Picard, James P. Winter, Maxwell E. McCombs and Stephen Lacy, editors, Press Concentration and Monopoly: New Perspectives on Newspaper Ownership and Operation (Norwood, N.Y.: Ablex Publishing Corp., 1988), page 166. And John C. Busterna, "Daily Newspaper Chains and the Antitrust Laws," Journalism Monographs, March 1989, No. 110, page 17.

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[13] David Bruce Daugherty, "Group-Owned Newspapers vs. Independently-Owned Newspapers: An Analysis of the Differences and Similarities," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas, 1983).

[14] Dan Drew and G. Cleveland Wilhoit, "Newshole Allocation Policies of American Daily Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, 53:439 (1976).

[15] Kenneth Rystrom, "Apparent Impact of Endorsements by Groups and Independent Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, 64:452 (1987).

[16] Ibid. Hale, pages 172-3.

[17] Loren Ghiglione, The Buying and Selling of America's Newspapers (Indianapolis: R.J. Berg, 1984).

[18] David H. Weaver and L.E. Mullins, "Content and Format Characteristics of Competing Daily Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, 52:257-264 (1975).

[19] Ibid. Litman and Bridges, page 12.

[20] Ibid. Daugherty; Ibid. Hale.

[21] Ibid. Becker; Ibid. Litman and Bridges.

[22] John C. Busterna, "National Advertising Pricing: Chain vs. Independent Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly, 65:307-312, 334 (1988). William Blankenburg, "A Newspaper Chain's Pricing Behavior," Journalism Quarterly, 60:275-280 (1980).

[23] John C. Busterna, "Trends in Daily Newspaper Ownership," Journalism Quarterly, 65:831-8 (1988).

Table 1. Changes Over Six Years for 180 Sampled Newspapers

Newspaper Variable	Mean Time One	Mean Time Two	T-Test Significance
Daily Circulation	26,908	27,638	.25
Sunday Circulation	35,385	38,002	.00
Subscription Price	95	138	.00
Advertising Price	36	71	.00
Associated Press	.84	.92	.00
United Press Int.	.30	.16	.00
LA Times	.06	.08	.10
New York Times	.11	.14	.20
Gannett	.03	.08	.01
Own Wire Service	.07	.19	.00
Other Wire Services	.19	.28	.02
Major Wire Services	1.14	1.08	.01
Total Wire Services	1.59	1.74	.01
Net Wire Services	1.52	1.56	.51

Table 2. Differences Between Three Types of Newspapers

Newspaper Variable	Changed Paper Mean	Indep. Paper Mean	Chain Paper Mean	F Ratio	F Probability
TIME ONE					
Wires	1.52	1.50	1.75	1.27	.28
Net Wire	1.48	1.50	1.58	.22	.80
Other Wire	.20	.10	.27	1.67	.19
Major Wires	1.13	1.18	1.12	.58	.56
Own Wire	.03	.00	.17	8.05	.00
AP	.87	.88	.78	1.31	.27
UPI	.27	.30	.33	.31	.73
LA Times	.07	.03	.07	.42	.66
NY Times	.07	.13	.13	.89	.41
Gannett	.00	.03	.05	1.44	.24
Daily Cir.	25,190	26,750	28,785	.42	.66
Sun. Circ.	32,455	38,124	35,670	.31	.73
Subscribe	89	93	102	3.02	.05
Advertising	34	35	39	1.08	.34
TIME TWO					
Wires	1.78	1.62	1.83	.90	.41
Net Wire	1.48	1.62	1.57	.39	.68
Other Wire	.33	.18	.32	1.25	.29
Major Wires	1.08	1.10	1.07	.22	.81
Own Wire	.30	.00	.27	11.80	.00
AP	.93	.90	.93	.31	.74
UPI	.15	.20	.13	.53	.59
LA Times	.08	.10	.07	.21	.81
NY Times	.07	.18	.17	2.01	.14
Gannett	.13	.00	.12	4.27	.02
Daily Cir.	26,548	27,468	28,897	.18	.84
Sun Circ.	30,875	40,167	37,649	1.13	.33
Subscribe	133	131	150	4.05	.02
Advertising	70	66	77	.88	.42

Table 3. Changes Over Six Years for Three Types of Newspapers

Newspaper Variable	Changed Paper Mean	Indep. Paper Mean	Chain Paper Mean	F Ratio	F Probability
Wires	.27	.12	.08	.99	.37
Net Wire	-.07	.11	-.35	4.46	.01
Other Wire	.13	.08	.05	.42	.66
Major Wires	-.05	-.08	-.05	.21	.81
Own Wire	.27	.00	.10	10.07	.00
AP	.07	.02	.15	2.62	.08
UPI	-.12	-.10	-.20	.86	.42
LA Times	.02	.07	.00	1.47	.23
NY Times	.00	.05	.03	.46	.63
Gannett	.13	-.03	.07	5.93	.00
Daily Cir.	1,360	720	112	.33	.72
Sun. Circ.	2,070	350	240	.40	.67
Subscribe	44	38	47	1.83	.16
Advertising	35	31	38	.86	.43

The Effects of Competition on the Content of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

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The Effects of Competition on the Content in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Abstract

The content of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch was examined in three time periods: 1986, before the St. Louis Globe-Democrat folded; 1989, after the Globe-Democrat folded and before the re-emergence of competition; and 1990, after the St. Louis Sun began operation. A number of significant changes were found in both visual and verbal items carried in the newspaper, though many appear to represent trends rather than responses to competition. The results suggest that professional standards and news values are not static, but change over time. Furthermore, monopoly may not be the most important variable in explaining changes in content.

The Effects of Competition on the Content in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch

The effect of competition on the content of newspapers has drawn a great deal of attention from researchers and journalists alike throughout the years. Two schools of thought exist.

One argument, based upon traditional capitalistic assumptions about competition in the marketplace, claims that a lack of competition will lead to a decrease in quality and a lack of diversity. Without an alternative product for disgruntled consumers to turn to, journalists at a monopolistic newspaper will not need to work as hard to provide their readers with diverse and indepth information as they would if they had to compete with other newspapers for their stories.

The opposing argument claims that journalistic standards and the increasing professionalism of journalists have led to a homogenization of news content, regardless of the ownership structure. Journalists have the same news values and so will do the best that they can to provide their readers with informative stories on a wide range of topics. News is news, whether individual journalists are competing with reporters from another newspaper or not. Therefore, news content should not vary for newspaper in competitive and non-competitive situations.

Most recent research has generally supported the latter notion of a sociology of news. These studies conclude that the news is determined more by the traditions, practices and beliefs of journalists than by the presence or absence of competition (See McCombs, 1986). News values are constant across all types of ownership situations.

The trend toward one-newspaper cities since the turn of the century has spurred several attempts at examining changes in newspaper content after a competing newspaper left a market. However, the circumstances under which each study is conducted is unique in and of itself. Kerlinger (1973) and Babbie (1979) both note that replication of previous studies is too seldom practiced in any research.

This study will be a partial replication of previous research in the influence of competition on news content. The present study, which examines the St. Louis Post-Dispatch in two periods of competition and an intermediary period of non-competition, moreover, will be an important addition to the previous studies in this area for five reasons.

First, the study will combine the methodology of several previous studies. It will compare coverage in the Post-Dispatch during a period of competition (1986, when it competed with the St. Louis Globe Democrat), to a period of non-competition (1989, two years after the Globe Democrat folded) -- similar to a methodology employed by McCombs (1988, 1986), Borstel (1956), Schweitzer and Goldman (1975), and Nixon and Jones (1956). It will also compare coverage in the Post-Dispatch during a time of no competition (1989, a few months before the emergence of competition) to a period of competition (1990, after the entrance of the St. Louis Sun into the marketplace) -- similar to a methodology employed by Rarick and Hartman (1966).

Second, the market examined -- St. Louis -- is much larger than almost all of the previous studies. Not only is much more is at stake in this larger market, but because of its large circulation, the Post-Dispatch has many more resources at its disposal to improve its product in battling a competitor. If a newspaper could change its content in response to a competitor, the Post-Dispatch, with its ample resources, could.

Third, the present study is much more recent than the previous investigations. The lone previous study that examined changes in one newspaper when another paper entered a market, for example, was conducted from 1948 to 1963 (Rarick and Hartman, 1966). If, as McCombs (1986) argues, journalistic standards are becoming more refined, competition should have even less of an effect now as was found in the past.

Fourth, the new newspaper entering the St. Louis market, the Sun, is a tabloid. Since the appearance of the competing newspaper is so different, the pressure for possible design changes in the Post-Dispatch could be stronger than had a more traditional style of newspaper entered the market. The pressure from this tabloid on the Post-Dispatch would be most pronounced on the front page.

Fifth, previous findings on the influence of competition have been often contradictory. Lacy (1989), for example, found newspapers used more wire service stories during times of competition. Rarick and Hartman (1966), however, found that newspapers increased local coverage during times of competition. The investigation here, then, may help to clear up the apparent ambiguity of previous findings.

Because of the disappearance and re-emergence of competing newspapers in St. Louis, the Post-Dispatch provides an ideal setting for an examination of the influence of competition on newspaper content.

St. Louis has a unique place in the history of American newspaper publishing. It is one of the largest newspaper markets to experience both the loss of a competing daily newspaper (the Globe-Democrat) and the arrival of a new competing daily (the Sun). The Globe-Democrat was established in 1852 and ceased publication in autumn of 1986. The daily circulation had been declining, from 210,712 in 1984 to 178,594 in 1986. The paper closed under the cloud of a bankruptcy suit by Globe employees after the State of Missouri refused to permit the issuance of bonds to subsidize the paper.

The Post-Dispatch, the flagship of the Pulitzer Publishing Company, was the survivor of the competition. It was established in 1878 by Joseph Pulitzer. The daily circulation of the paper has steadily increased from 264,721 in 1984 to 277,527 in 1986 and 372,397 in 1988.

The Sun, a multi-color tabloid, debuted on September 25, 1989, with 55,000 subscribers. It is the latest endeavor of Ralph Ingersoll, whose privately owned company owns the extensive chain of suburban newspapers in the St. Louis market. All 200,000 copies of the first issue sold out. Editors of the rival Post-Dispatch, in an editorial the following day (September 26, 1989; p. C9), said the competition "in just about any business sharpens performance and the public always benefits." The Sun folded after only eight months in operation.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Lacy (1989), in proposing a model for demand of news, predicts that the news content of competitive newspapers will not differ greatly from the content of monopolistic newspapers because of similar geographic emphasis of what is news. Instead, Lacy claims that competitive newspapers will increase expenditures by increasing the number of reporters employed and number of wire services and visuals used. Calling upon Edward Chamberlin's Theory of Monopolistic Competition, Lacy suggests that newspapers in competitive situations must differentiate themselves, but at the same time remain substitutes for each other by providing relatively similar products. Therefore, they must spend money to match coverage and try to provide better, or at least different, coverage in some areas.

If Lacy's ideas are correct, the content in competitive newspapers could differ from the content in monopolistic newspapers in a number of ways:

* Wire services: Competitive newspapers will expand the number of wire services to which they subscribe. Thus, competitive newspapers should run more wire service stories than non-competitive newspapers.

* Graphics: Competitive papers should invest in new technologies, such as computers with advanced graphics capabilities. Thus, competitive newspapers should run more graphics produced with these new computers than would non-competitive newspapers.

* Number and size of photos: Photographs improve the appearance of newspapers and attract readers. Thus, competitive newspapers should emphasize photos by running more and larger photos than would non-competitive newspapers.

* Number of pages per issue: Each page produced by a newspaper costs money. Thus, competitive newspapers should produce more pages than would non-competitive newspapers.

On the other hand, according to Lacy's model, content in competitive newspapers should not differ from content in monopolistic newspapers in a number of ways:

* Categories of news coverage: Because of similar news values among journalists, the types of news stories run should not differ for competitive or non-competitive newspapers. Therefore, the number of stories dealing with political news, sports or business, for example, should be very similar in competitive and non-competitive newspapers.

* Geographical location of stories: Again, because journalistic values are so similar, the geographical location of stories should not differ for competitive and non-competitive newspapers. Both competitive and monopolistic newspapers should use similar amounts of international, national, state and local news stories.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Three research questions will be investigated. Each deals with the influence of competition on newspaper content.

1. Does the disappearance of a competing newspaper result in significant content changes in the surviving newspaper?

Here, three previous studies found only a few differences in content after a newspaper left the market. Borstel (1956) found more letters to the editor were run in non-competitive papers. Schweitzer and Goldman (1975) found no changes in news content but discovered fewer editorials and more pictures were run during intense competition. Nixon and Jones (1956) also found more editorials, as well as a smaller newshole, in non-competitive papers.

2. Does the reappearance of a competing newspaper result in significant content changes of the previously monopolistic newspaper?

Only one study examined content changes when a new newspaper entered a market -- the opposite of the current trend of newspapers leaving a market. Rarick and Hartman (1966) found that local news and features, pictures and opinion columns -- what they called immediate reward news -- increased during intense competition.

3. Does the disappearance or reappearance of a competing newspaper result in significant changes on Page 1 of the surviving or previously monopolistic newspaper?

Weaver and Mullins (1975), while finding no difference in editorial content of competing dailies in 23 U.S. cities, did find that trailing newspapers used more modern layout than leading newspapers, including larger pictures, color photos, smaller headlines, fewer stories on front page, no column rules and a six-column layout.

METHOD

Seven days were randomly selected to form a constructed week from February of 1986, 1989 and 1990. February was selected because of the likelihood that no seasonal factors would exist in this month which could bias the results.

The content of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch was examined during the constructed week for each of the three years. The time periods pertain: to 1) a few months before the St. Louis Globe Democrat folded in fall 1986); 2) a few months before the St. Louis Sun began operation (September 1989); and 3) a few months after the Sun began operation.

Coders were instructed to examine every item run on every page for each of the dates in the constructed week and to categorize each item on a number of different variables, which included content and appearance categories. The content variables were:

*the type of item (news story, feature story, photograph, graphic devices, editorials and opinion columns, amusements, and miscellaneous columns);

*the source of the item, or who produced the story (staff writer, AP, other wire service, syndicate, other source and unknown);

*where the story originated (international, national, state, local and unknown).

*the subject covered in the story (political news, business, sports, social issues, crime, human interest, health-science, accidents and obituaries);

The appearance categories included:

*headline size, including point size, columns and decks.

*the number of photographs and the column inches devoted to them;

*the number of graphics and the column inches devoted to them.

To examine differences between categories, the type of item was further broken down by source, location and subject.

The square inches devoted to each news story were not coded, since previous studies have found extremely high correlations between frequency of story types and space devoted to story types. McCombs (1986), for example, found a .99 correlation between frequency and total space.

Raw scores of each category were then used to compute chi-squares, which tested differences in the content of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch across time.

RESULTS

Because of the large number of items coded (2,197 items in 1986, 2,389 in 1989 and 2,379 in 1990), the chi-square tests were especially sensitive to relatively small percentage changes within categories. Therefore, the chi-square tests show a great many differences on the variables examined. It should be noted that the totals for the type breakdowns do not always equal the totals for type in the earlier tables because items of combined location are excluded. Also, letters to the editor, advice columns and other miscellaneous items are not included in the subject figures.

Changes 1986-1989

Both the monopolistic competition theory and sociology of news theory would predict that the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* should have changed little, if at all, after the *Globe-Democrat* expired in 1986. However, significant differences were found on nearly all content and appearance measures from 1986 to 1989. Overall, changes in both type and subject indicated that the *Post-Dispatch* shifted toward more soft news in 1989 (Table 1).

Type: Overall, the size of the news hole increased from 1986 to 1989, presumably because the *Post-Dispatch* picked up some of the *Globe-Democrat*'s advertisers and therefore expanded the number of pages per issue. However, the amount of space devoted to news and feature articles dipped slightly from 1986 to 1989. This can partly be explained by the decision of the Post-Dispatch to pick up some of the favorite comics and amusements from the defunct Globe-Democrat.

Two other differences were evident. First, The Post-Dispatch ran more graphics in 1989, though this may have been due to a national trend toward the use of more graphic devices. Second, the Post-Dispatch published more letters to the editor in 1989 (72 to 53 in 1986), though the overall percentage of space devoted to editorial content did not increase over the three-year period.

Subject: A few differences account for the significant change in subjects from 1986 to 1989. In general, the changes reveal a shift from hard to softer news. Political items declined from 1986 while social issue items increased (Table 1). The number of health and science stories dipped sharply after 1986. The subject matter for other items did not change much from 1986 to 1989.

The breakdown of subject by type explains some of the shifts in subject matter. The decline in political stories resulted not from fewer news stories and feature stories about politics, but from fewer opinion columns and news analyses about political matters.

Source: Two significant changes were found. The Post-Dispatch used more syndicated items and fewer items from wires other than Associated Press in 1989 than in 1986 (Table 1). The increase in the number of syndicated items is the result of the Post-Dispatch picking up some of the Globe-Democrat's comics and other amusements.

The increased space devoted to amusements cut into the amount of space devoted to copy from wires other than Associated Press. But although the space devoted to wire copy decreased, the *Post-Dispatch* increased the number of wire services it carried. The paper added Knight-Ridder and Scripps-Howard to its fold, although it dropped United Press International -- a significant source of wire stories in 1986 (80 stories total). All told, the *Post-Dispatch* ran stories from seven different wire services in 1986 and nine in 1989.

Location: Differences were also found in the location of stories between 1986 and 1989. (Table 1). After competition died, the *Post-Dispatch* did not cover the St. Louis area as fully, as the percentage of local material declined from 34 percent to 30 percent. But the drop in local coverage did not translate into an increase in national and international stories -- in fact, both dropped, with international items dropping significantly. The increase came in items with no specific location.

News Stories: When broken down by type, the subjects and sources of news stories (Table 2) were again significantly different in 1986 and 1989. The number of human interest news stories nearly doubled from 1986 to 1989. Health and science stories dropped sharply. The *Post-Dispatch* also ran more AP news stories, but fewer news stories from other wires. The location of news stories did not change significantly.

__Feature Stories__: The content of feature stories showed little change between 1986 and 1989 (Table 3). The __Post-Dispatch__ ran more business features in 1989 and fewer AP features.

__Editorials__: Only the subject of editorials changed in the Post-Dispatch (Table 4). Between 1986 and 1989, the newspaper ran more business, human interest and sports opinion pieces, but fewer political and health-science editorials. The significant drop in scientific editorials may have resulted from events rather than a conscious decision to move away from science-related topics: The space shuttle Challenger exploded in January 1986 and the __Post-Dispatch__ continued to run editorials and stories on the disaster in February.

__Columns__: The content of columns changed little from 1986 to 1989 (Table 5). The __Post-Dispatch__ ran fewer columns produced by unknown sources and dealing with local matters. It ran more columns with unknown locations, however.

__Photographs__: Photographs differed in a number of ways between 1986 and 1989 (Table 6). After competition ceased, the __Post-Dispatch__ decreased the size of its photos. The percentage of photos less than 10 column inches jumped 5 percentage points. On the other hand, the percentage of photos more than 20 column inches declined. The source of photos also changed. The __Post-Dispatch__ ran more photos from other sources and fewer photos from other wires in 1989.

Graphics: The Post-Dispatch greatly increased the number of graphic devices it ran overall (225 vs. 141) from 1986 to 1989 (Table 7). But although graphic devices increased, they did not become more prominent. While two-thirds of all graphics in 1986 were 10 column inches or less, nearly 80 percent of those in 1989 were small graphics. The Post-Dispatch also used fewer staff produced graphics and fewer international graphics in 1989 than in 1986. It should be noted that this study only listed graphics with local bylines as being St. Louis-produced. Many of the graphics listed as "unknown" may have been created by staff workers.

Headlines: The percentage of large headlines also dipped after 1986 (Table 8). The Post-Dispatch used twice as many large headlines (42 points and over) in 1986 than in 1989 and the percentage of small headlines (18 point or under) leaped from 27 to 42 percent.

The headline format also changed somewhat between 1986 and 1989. The editors moved away from a two-deck format to a single deck look. However, there were no significant differences in the number of columns the headlines spanned. A majority of the headlines in each year stretched over either one or two columns.

Changes 1989-1990

The two theories of competition would predict different responses to the re-emergence of competition in late 1989. The monopoly theory would suggest that the Post-Dispatch would work to differentiate its product within the framework of accepted professional standards, particularly by increasing the amount of wire services and amount devoted to visuals. The sociology of news theory predicts no difference in content.

Results from this study support the traditional capitalistic theory. The Post-Dispatch again changed in both content and appearance from 1989 to 1990.

Type: Overall, the shift away from news and feature articles that began in 1989 continued in 1990 (Table 1). However, the movement was toward increasing the number of columns rather than an increase in the number of comics and amusements.

Subject: The drop in political stories continued in 1990, even though 1990 was an election year. However, the Post-Dispatch in general re-emphasized hard news in 1990. The number of human interest stories decreased in 1990 while the percentage of business articles increased significantly.

Source: Lacy predicts in his theory of monopolistic competition that a competitive newspaper will increase its number of staff and wire services. Although the data did not permit an actual count of staff members, the percentage of staff-produced stories increased slightly from 1989 to 1990, though this increase was not statistically significant. However, the number of stories from wire services other than AP declined slightly. Furthermore, the number of wire services the Post-Dispatch carried apparently declined. The

Post-Dispatch dropped Knight-Ridder and did not appear to pick up any additional wire services.

Location: With the tabloid Sun coming to challenge readership in the St. Louis metro area, the Post-Dispatch apparently reached out to attract readers throughout Missouri and Illinois. State articles increased from 1989 to 1990 while national stories declined.

News Stories: When broken down by type, only two differences were found for news stories between 1989 and 1990 (Table 2). The number of political news stories decreased while the number of business stories increased. None of the source or location categories differed.

Feature Stories: Between 1989 and 1990, the Post-Dispatch features changed in a number of ways (Table 3). The newspaper ran more political features and sports features but fewer general human interest features. It also ran fewer features from unknown sources and fewer features from unknown locations, but more features from the state.

Editorials: Many of these trends found from 1986-1989 were reversed in 1989 to 1990 (Table 4). The Post-Dispatch ran more political editorials and fewer human interest and sports editorials.

Columns: The newspaper increased its use of business columns in 1990 (Table 5). It also use more columns produced by unknown sources while decreasing its use of columns produced by other sources and with unknown locations.

Photographs: Lacy's theory of monopolistic competition predicts that newspapers will become more visual in order to attract readers during times of competition. However, the number of photographs did not change significantly from 1989 to 1990, nor did the location or source of the photographs (Table 6).

Graphics: The number of graphic devices remained essentially the same from 1989 to 1990, but the average size of the graphics shrank (Table 7). The percentage of graphics under 5 inches jumped 9 percent. This increase reflects, in part, the use of more exploding quotes in 1990 (60 in 1990 compared to 45 in 1989).

Headlines: The Post-Dispatch's biggest change between 1989 and 1990 occurred in the size of headlines and the number of columns the headlines spanned (Table 8). The Post-Dispatch ran more large, eye-grabbing headlines in 1990. The number of small headlines (18 points or below) declined from 42 to 30 percent from 1989 to 1990 while the number of large headlines (42 points or above) increased from 8 to 12 percent.

Although the size of the headlines increased, fewer of them were bannered across the page. The number of five- and six-column headlines dropped in 1990 while the number of one-column headlines increased dramatically.

The apparent paradox of increased headline sizes yet decreased headline lengths can be resolved by changes in column format from 1989 to 1990. The Post-Dispatch went to a five-column format on many inside pages in 1990 and increased the number of odd-column formats. The number of 1 1/2 column headlines, for instance, leaped from 2 percent in 1989 to 18 percent in 1990 [data not shown].

Front page changes

The front page is the window of the newspaper, beckoning the reader to look inside. If the Post-Dispatch changed over the three sampling periods those changes should be clearly apparent on the front page.

The number of front page items is too small to accurately gauge changes using chi-square. Indeed, most of the chi-squares were insignificant. However, clear trends are apparent both from 1986 to 1989 and 1989 to 1990 (Table 9 and 10).

Type: The Post-Dispatch adopted a less cluttered look in 1989, as the number of items on the front page declined. The content of the front page also changed after the Globe folded in 1986. The Post-Dispatch ran fewer news stories and more pictures and graphics (Table 9). This trend continued in 1990.

Subject: The editors' choices of subjects for the front page of the Post-Dispatch reaffirmed the earlier observations that the paper shifted from hard news to softer news in 1989 then changed back to harder news in 1990 (Table 9). The figures for the subject breakdown are too small to analyze through chi-square, but several trends are apparent.

The percentage of political stories dropped from 50 to 42 percent from 1986 to 1989 and the amount devoted to human interest news and features nearly tripled over this time span.

The number of political stories climbed in 1990 while the percentage of human interest stories fell. Surprisingly, while business coverage over the entire paper increased considerably from 1986 to 1990, the percentage of front page stories devoted to business dropped.

Source: The source of news changed dramatically from 1986 to 1989 (Table 9). The Post-Dispatch ran more staff-produced work on page one and fewer wire stories and photos. Associated Press stories and photos virtually disappeared after 1986. Wire editors compiled stories from several services in 1989 rather than relying simply on Associated Press. The source of news items on Page 1 did not change significantly from 1989 to 1990.

Location: With the switch from wire to staff content, more pictures and stories centered on St. Louis in 1989 than 1986 with a sharp decline in the percentage of international stories (Table 9). In 1990, the Post-Dispatch increased its use of state stories on the front page, as was the trend throughout the newspaper.

Graphics and Photos: One might expect that during times of competition the Post-Dispatch would increase size of photos and headlines to try to make the paper more visually appealing in order to boost street sales. This did not prove to be the case (Table 10).

The percentage of large photos on page 1 did decline after the Post-Dispatch lost its competitor. But when the tabloid Sun entered the market, the Post-Dispatch did not increase the size of its front page photos, to compete with the front pages of the Sun, which normally contain only a photo and a headline. Rather, the Post-Dispatch simply added more small mug size photos to its front page (Table 10).

The Post-Dispatch did run larger graphic devices in 1990 than the other two time periods. But this can be explained by a format change involving the "what's inside" box. Before 1990, this graphic was run horizontally at the bottom of the page. The inside box was moved to the left-hand column in 1990 and its size increased.

Headlines: There were no significant differences in headline sizes over the three time periods (Table 10). The Post-Dispatch did run more small (under 18 point) headlines in 1989 than the other two time periods, but the number of large headlines remained the same over the three time periods.

The number of headlines increased from 1989 to 1990 even though the Post-Dispatch ran fewer stories on page 1 in 1990. The Post-Dispatch ran more smaller headlines under the main headline in 1990. These drop headlines tended to be two deck headlines as evidenced by the large increase in the number of two deck headlines in 1990 from 1989.

DISCUSSION

This study examined changes in content and appearance for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch over three periods of competition: a period of declining competition just before the Globe-Democrat folded in 1986, a period of no competition in 1989, and a period of increased competition in 1990 after the St. Louis Sun entered the market.

More specifically, this study wished to determine which of the two dominant theories -- the monopolistic competition or the sociology of news theory -- best explained content and design differences, if any.

The two theories make different predictions. The monopolistic competition theory assumes that newspapers will change to keep their share of the market when competition emerges. The sociology of news theory claims competition is irrelevant -- journalists and editors share common news values that do not change as a result of competition.

This study found support for both theories, suggesting the theories can complement each other. The Post-Dispatch underwent some significant changes from 1989 to 1989, undergirding the monopolistic competition theory. However, the changes from 1989 to 1990 do not always match the monopolistic competition theory advanced recently by Lacy (1989).

Lacy suggests that the types of stories a newspaper runs and the subject matter of those stories should not change significantly during times of competition because newspapers must still adhere to standards of what is news. However, this study did find significant differences in both type and subject matter material run in the Post-Dispatch from the period of no competition to increased competition. Specifically, the Post-Dispatch increased its business coverage and cut back on the space devoted to human interest news, suggesting that the Post-Dispatch favored harder news stories in 1990.

Lacy also suggests that changes that do occur during times of competition will result not from changing news values, but by investing more money to make both the appearance and content more appealing to its readers. Specifically, newspapers should increase the number of reporters, wire and syndicated services as well as the number of visuals used.

The Post-Dispatch did indeed increase the number of staff-written stories in 1990 and added more syndicated material. However, the Post-Dispatch cut the number of wire services it used and the paper did not increase its number of visual elements during a time of increased competition.

Some comparisons between the two periods of competition (1986 and 1990) and the no competition time span (1989) also turn up evidence to support the monopolistic competition theory. As stated earlier, the Post-Dispatch ran more hard news stories in the periods of competition vs. no competition. The Post-Dispatch also ran more large photos and larger headlines during the periods of competition.

But the results from the period of declining competition to no competition throw some doubt on the theory of monopolistic competition. One would expect that the Post-Dispatch would change little, if any, when the Globe-Democrat folded.

Yet this study found significant changes between 1986 and 1989 with changes generally larger than between the period of no competition and increased competition (1989-1990). The Post-Dispatch turned to softer news by increasing human interest stories and cutting space devoted to politics and science stories. The Post-Dispatch increased the number of graphics and syndicated material, picking up comics and other amusements formerly carried by the Globe-Democrat.

The greater changes from the time of declining competition to no competition than from no competition to increased competition may simply reflect the differences in time spans (three years vs. one year between measurements). Larger differences would be expected in the longer time span if a newspaper was responding to changes in the field -- as the Post-Dispatch may well have been doing.

However, the changes might also expose a myth about newspaper competition. Even after the Globe-Democrat folded, the Post-Dispatch did not enjoy a monopoly on news. The paper still had to compete with television news for the attention of the audience. Perhaps the Post-Dispatch picked up some of the Globe-Democrat's favorite comics and columns to try to win over that paper's audience, then adopted a more feature approach to compete more directly with television news.

This study also found support for the sociology of news theory, particularly when changes over the three periods of time are examined.

Many of the changes from 1986 to 1990 appear to represent trends rather than specific changes in response to competition. The number of both news and feature stories declined steadily over the four-year period while the number of graphics, columns and comics/amusements grew over the same time frame. Similarly, while the space devoted to political materials went on a downhill slide from 1986 to 1990, the news hole given to social issues such as education, civil rights and the environment increased. There is no reason to believe that these changes were implemented because of changes in the marketplace.

These trends over time suggest that the sociology of news theory needs to be reconceptualized and expanded. Reporters and editors may not change content to respond to competition because they share certain standards of professionalism and news values, as several researchers have claimed. But the professional standards and news values are not static; they change over time. Studies of objectivity (Schudson, 1978; Schiller, 1981) show that definitions of what is news have changed over time. Similarly, changes in content over the three periods may reflect changes in what the reporters, the public, or both think is important. For instance, the increase in stories about social issues may have resulted from heightened awareness of the importance of such issues as education, the environment and civil rights.

The results from this study run counter to earlier studies that found minimal changes in times of competition and non-competition. However, this study was conducted in a major media market, unlike most of the earlier studies. The Post-Dispatch had more resources to implement change than smaller newspapers and much larger financial stakes in keeping its audience. The differences between this and earlier studies, then, might reflect the different type of papers investigated.

This study found some support for both the monopolistic competition and sociology of news theories, but more support for the latter. This study suggests that monopoly may not be the most important variable in trying to explain changes in content. More attention needs to be paid to general changes in the field and how they affect the content and appearance of the newspaper.

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Table 1: Content differences in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Type of item	1986		1989		1990
News	38%	**	32%		31%
Features	8.5		7		6.5
Photos	19		19		18
Graphics	6.5	***	10		11
Columns	7		6	**	9
Editorials	7		9		7
Amusements	14		17		17.5
	100%		100%		100%
N =	2140		2308		2304

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 24.96, 6 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = 15.58, 6 d.f. p < .05

Subject	1986		1989		1990
Politics	31%	*	26%	*	24%
Business	13		14	**	20
Social Issues	2	*	4		5
Human Interest	17	*	21	*	17
Crime	9		8		9
Accidents	2		3		1
Sports	16		18		19
Health/science	5	***	2		2.5
Obituaries	3		3		3
	100%		100%		100%
N =	1178		1099		1082

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 29.08, 8 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = 19.65, 8 d.f. p < .01

Source	1986		1989		1990
Staff	23%		23%		24%
AP	11		11		11
Other wire	11	***	7		7
Syndicate	17	**	20		20
Other source	8		8		9
Unknown/none	30		30		29
	100%		100%		100%
N =	2197		2389		2379

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 33.15, 5 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = 19.91, 5 d.f. p < .001

Location	1986		1989		1990
International	13%	***	8%		9%
National	25		27	*	23.5
State	8		7	*	9
Local	34	*	30		29
Unknown/none	20	***	28		29.5
	100%		100%		100%
N =	2179		2347		2349

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 62.36, 4 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = 10.30, 4 d.f. p < .05

* -- p < .05
** -- p < .01
*** -- p < .001

Table 2: Content differences in news stories in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Subject	1986		1989		1990
Politics	34%		33%	*	26%
Business	16.5		16	**	23
Social Issues	3		4		6
Human Interest	3	**	6		4
Crime	13		11		13
Accidents	3		4		3
Sports	16		19		17
Health/science	6	***	2		3
Obituaries	5		5		5
	100%		100%		100%
N =	805		747		706

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 29.29, 8 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = 35.08, 8 d.f. p < .001

Source	1986		1989		1990
Staff	23%		28%		28%
AP	20	*	25		30
Other wire	22	**	16		14
Syndicate	0		0		0
Other source	4		2		3
Unknown/none	31		29		25
	100%		100%		100%
N =	797		749		706

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 20.03, 4 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = Not significant

Location	1986	1989	1990
International	19%	16%	15%
National	27	32	29
State	11	12	18
Local	43	40	38
Unknown/none	0	0	0
	100%	100%	100%
N =	790	732	704

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = 8.99, 4 d.f. p < .05

* -- p < .05
** -- p < .01
*** -- p < .001

Table 3: Content differences in feature stories in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Subject	1986		1989		1990
Politics	2%		2%	*	7%
Business	5	*	13		14
Social Issues	0		0		0
Human Interest	59		53	*	37
Crime	3		0		0
Accidents	0		0		0
Sports	27		25	*	37
Health/science	4		6		4
Obituaries	0		0		0
	100%		100%		100%
N =	176		167		150

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not signficant
1989-1990 = 15.24, 5 d.f. p < .01

Source	1986		1989		1990
Staff	47%		47%		58%
AP	13	*	6		9
Other wire	15		13		13
Syndicate	0		0		0
Other source	9		13		15
Unknown/none	16		19	*	10
	100%		100%		100%
N =	182		165		149

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = 10.20, 4 d.f. p < .05

Location	1986		1989		1990
International	8%		4%		7%
National	33		36		32
State	9		9	*	16
Local	46		38		41
Unknown/none	4	*	14	**	3
	100%		100%		100%
N =	178		161		140

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 13.76, 4 d.f. p < .01
1989-1990 = Not significant

* -- p < .05
** -- p < .01
*** -- p < .001

Table 4: Content differences in editorials in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Subject	1986		1989		1990
Politics	88%	**	47%	**	80
Business	5	**	11		7
Social Issues	5		8		11
Human Interest	0	**	12	**	0
Crime	1		6		3
Accidents	0		1		0
Sports	1	***	14	***	0
Health/science	8	***	0		0
Obituaries	0		0		0
	100%		100%		100%
N =	103		83		74

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 45.52, 6 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = Too many empty cells to run chi-square

Source	1986	1989	1990
Staff	28%	30%	30%
AP	0	2	0
Other wire	2	2	0
Syndicate	28	16	18
Other source	44	51	51
Unknown/none	0	0	0
	100%	100%	100%
N =	159	190	171

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = Not signficant

Location	1986	1989	1990
International	19%	12%	16%
National	36	33	22
State	4	4	7
Local	6	4	7
Unknown/none	34	47	46
	100%	100%	100%
N =	159	187	171

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = Not significant

* -- p < .05
** -- p < .01
*** -- p < .001

Table 5: Content differences in columns in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Subject	1986		1989		1990
Politics	0%		0%		1%
Business	13		8	*	20
Social Issues	0		0		0
Human Interest	76		82		63
Crime	0		0		0
Accidents	0		0		0
Sports	10		9		16
Health/science	0		1		0
Obituaries	0		0		0
	100%		100%		100%
N =	103		102		150

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 36.09, 2 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = 11.15, 2 d.f. p < .01

Source	1986		1989		1990
Staff	48%		46%		57%
AP	0		0		0
Other wire	3		2		0
Syndicate	27		35		31
Other source	10		14	*	5
Unknown/none	12	***	2	*	7
	100%		100%		100%
N =	147		151		204

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 13.74, 4 d.f. p < .01
1989-1990 = 17.17, 4 d.f. p < .01

Location	1986		1989		1990
International	4%		2%		5%
National	25		26		28
State	1		1		3
Local	40	**	21		31
Unknown/none	29	**	49	*	33
	100%		100%		100%
N =	147		150		203

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 18.99, 4 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = Not significant

* -- p < .05
** -- p < .01
*** -- p < .001

Table 6: Content differences in photographs in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Source	1986		1989	1990
Staff	22%		25%	28%
AP	14		14	14
Other wire	9	**	1	3
Syndicate	0		0	0
Other source	2	*	6	6
Unknown/none	57		54	49
	100%		100%	100%
N =	407		446	408

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 13.93, 4 d.f. p < .01
1989-1990 = Not significant

Location	1986	1989	1990
International	13%	10%	12%
National	33	33	33
State	8	7	6
Local	43	48	47
Unknown/none	3	2	1
	100%	100%	100%
N =	407	446	407

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = Not significant

Size	1986		1989	1990
0-5 inches	52%		49%	47%
6-10 inches	13.5	**	21.5	19
11-15 inches	14		17.5	16
16-20 inches	9.5	**	5	8
21-25 inches	4		4	4
26-plus inches	6		3	6
	100%		100%	100%
N =	407		446	407

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 21.21, 5 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = Not significant

* -- p < .05
** -- p < .01
*** -- p < .001

Table 7: Content differences in graphics in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Source	1986		1989		1990
Staff	16%	*	8%		12%
AP	0		2		1
Other wire	0		1		0
Syndicate	0		0		0
Other source	11		12		5
Unknown/none	73		76		50
	100%		100%		100%
N =	140		225		260

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = Not significant

Location	1986		1989		1990
International	6%	*	2%		3%
National	30		23		27
State	8		6		7
Local	25		30	*	21
Unknown/none	31		39		43
	100%		100%		100%
N =	140		222		258

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 9.41, 4 d.f. $p < .05$
1989-1990 = Not significant

Size	1986		1989		1990
0-5 inches	47.5%		56%		65%
6-10 inches	20		23		16.5
11-15 inches	13.5		7		5
16-20 inches	11	**	5	*	1.5
21-plus inches	8		8		11
	100%		100%		100
N =	141		225		260

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = Not significant

* -- $p < .05$
** -- $p < .01$
*** -- $p < .001$

Table 8: Headline differences in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Headline Point Sizes

	1986		1989		1990
48-plus points	6%		5%		5%
42 point	10	***	3	*	7
36 point	20	**	7	***	14
30 point	25		21		23
24 point	12	***	21		21
18 point	12	**	19	***	11
14 point	15	**	23		19
	100%		100%		100%
N =	523		515		516

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 79.81, 6 d.f. p < .001
1989-1990 = 33.56, 6 d.f. p < .001

Headline Columns

	1986		1989		1990
1 column	36%		35%	**	46%
2 columns	30		29		26
3 columns	14.5		17		13
4 columns	8		8		9
5 columns	4.5		6		4
6 columns	6		5		3
	100%		100%		100%
N =	523		515		516

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = 17.72, 5 d.f. p < .01

Headline Decks

	1986		1989		1990
1 line	42%	*	51%		52%
2 lines	43	*	33		31
3 lines	15		16		17
	100%		100%		100%
N =	523		515		516

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 11.72, 2 d.f. p < .01
1989-1990 = Not significant

* -- p < .05
** -- p < .01
*** -- p < .001

Table 9: Content differences on the front pages of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Type of item	1986		1989	1990
News	62%		57.5%	50%
Features	7		5	4
Photos	16		20	25
Graphics	15		16	28
Editorials	0		0	1
	100%		100%	100%
N =	88		80	80

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = Not significant

Subject	1986		1989	1990
Politics	50%		42%	47%
Business	13		11	4
Social Issues	2		8	11
Human Interest	6		17	7
Crime	21		13	16
Accidents	2		4	2
Sports	0		2	2
Health/science	6		4	9
Obituaries	0		0	2
	100%		100%	100%
N =	62		63	45

Too few items in cells to conduct chi-square

Source	1986		1989	1990
Staff	43%		51%	45%
AP	18	**	4	3
Other wire	19		20	24
Other source	1		5	4
Unknown/none	17		21	24
	100%		100%	100%
N =	88		80	80

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 13.54, 4 d.f. $p < .01$
1989-1990 = Not significant

Location	1986		1989	1990
International	25%	*	11%	18%
National	27		28	21
State	8		9	19
Local	31		41	34
Unknown/none	9		10	9
	100%		100%	100%
N =	88		80	80

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = Not significant

* -- $p < .05$
** -- $p < .01$
*** -- $p < .001$

Table 10: Front page design differences in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch between periods of declining competition (1986), no competition (1989) and increased competition (1990).

Photo Size	1986		1989		1990
0-10 inches	21%		50%		50%
11-20 inches	43		19		25
21-plus inches	36		31		25
	100%		100%		100%
N =	14		16		20

Graphic Size	1986		1989		1990
0-10 inches	38%		46%		50%
11-20 inches	62		54	*	13
21-plus inches	0		0	*	38
	100%		100%		100%
N =	13		13		16

Headline Point Sizes	1986		1989		1990
42-plus points	17%		16%		18%
24-36 points	70		61		68
18 and under points	13		23		15
	100%		100%		100%
N =	70		56		62

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = Not significant

Headline Columns	1986		1989		1990
1 column	43%		38%		39%
2 columns	26		18		29
3 column	17		20		16
4 columns	4		7		6
5 column	4		7		10
6 columns	6		7	*	0
	100%		100%		100%
N =	70		56		62

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = Not significant
1989-1990 = Not significant

Headline Decks	1986		1989		1990
1 line	40%		41%		44%
2 lines	39	*	18	*	40
3 lines	21		41	*	16
	100%		100%		100%
N =	70		56		62

Overall chi-squares:
1986-1989 = 8.54, 2 d.f. $p < .05$
1989-1990 = 11.59, 2 d.f. $p < .01$

* -- $p < .05$
** -- $p < .01$
*** -- $p < .001$

VOICES IN THE NEWS: NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF HURRICANE HUGO AND THE LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE

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VOICES IN THE NEWS: NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF HURRICANE HUGO AND THE LOMA PRIETA EARTHQUAKE

News media construct social accounts of events in the "real world."[1] The degree of concordance that exists between real world events and media representations of them is often the subject of debate, although difficult to establish. Even stories that are accurate, objective, balanced and fair--the traditional criteria by which journalistic accounts are judged--must choose among competing issues and interpretations in deciding what information to include and what to exclude. These gatekeeping decisions allow some institutional voices to speak through the vehicle of the media, and keep other voices silent. The opportunity to speak accords legitimacy to both the message and its bearer, and is used to promote institutional interests in making claims about the character of an event.

The socially shaped character of events in the news is relatively obvious in the case of political events and social issues, but more subtle in the case of natural disasters. Nevertheless, although such events occur outside the control of social institutions, the interpretation and evaluation of these events is very much a social process. This reinterpretation takes place largely retrospectively, as society tries to comprehend events that have already occurred.[2]

News media are a forum in which claims are made about the character of events;[3] in the case of natural disasters, claims are advanced about blame for outcomes (construction, government inaction, nature, "luck") and responsibility for solutions. Institutional interests[4] claim and disclaim accountability for certain aspects of a situation, presenting cases for the allocation of additional resources and putting the best "light" on their own efforts to alleviate negative effects.

This article will summarize results from a study of how newspaper coverage of the Loma Prieta (California) earthquake and of Hurricane Hugo, which occurred within weeks of each other in the fall of 1989, used quotes from expert sources to construct claims about institutional needs and responsibilities. Two classes of findings will be outlined: we will summarize the types of sources given "voices" in the news and the subjects they covered, and we will analyze--although in a preliminary way--the types of claims likely to be made on behalf of the speakers' institutional interests.

Hurricane Hugo hit the mainland U.S. coast at midnight on Thursday, September 21, 1989, after having caused extensive damage in the Caribbeans where at least 28 deaths and over $2 billion in property damage were attributed to the storm. In the U.S. Hugo claimed 11 lives and may have caused over $750 million in damage.[5] The Loma Prieta earthquake, which registered 6.9 on the Richter scale, occurred at about 5 p.m. on Tuesday, October 17, 1989. The 15-second event killed about a hundred people, making it the third most lethal in U.S. history. Estimates of the costs of repairing damaged buildings and roads were as high as $3 billion, with losses to regional gross product ranging up to ten times as much.[6]

Previous Research

This study has been guided by a general interest in the use journalists make of expert, especially scientific, sources. Identifying and gaining access to appropriate scientific sources is a recognized problem in journalism.[7] While journalistic coverage of science-related issues may not be as factually inaccurate as some critics claim, sources cited are not always appropriate to the issue at hand.[8] Journalists may have trouble distinguishing between subspecialties within technical disciplines; appropriate experts may not be willing to serve as sources. "Framing" scientific information in the forms traditional to journalism also poses problems; these have been documented more extensively for broadcast journalism,[9] but exist as well for print news.

In a more general way, the concerns of this study also relate to the emerging issue of how media accounts structure perceptions of risk.[10] Allan Mazur[11] has asserted that all media coverage of technological risks, whether positive or negative in tone, generates negative public opinion, an assertion that has received support in a recent empirical test.[12] Relatively small variations in how news stories are structured and interpreted can apparently influence the levels of risk and control readers perceive.[13] Natural disaster coverage both draws from and contributes to readers' and viewers' general perceptions of the nature of such disasters, including the degree of associated risk.

In the normal course of events, scientific information often reaches the public as a result of the initiative taken by members of the scientific community.[14] This contrasts with the situation for natural disasters, when media initiatives and the initiatives taken by various concerned public agencies seem more likely to control information-gathering activities.[15] Substantial changes that occur in the news-gathering process in response to natural disasters, which are among the most-read news items newspapers are likely to carry; one study notes that following a disaster the demand for news often exceeds the supply.[16]

The "truncated gatekeeping" that occurs as a result of this information vacuum has been identified as one characteristic of mass media coverage of disasters that invites further study.[17] Ideally, the demand for information could serve an important function by opening up opportunities to educate the general public with respect to the technical background of disastrous events and steps to be taken to minimize their negative impact, information that might not be considered particularly newsworthy under normal circumstances.

Here we consider the proposition that the "open gate" phenomenon instead allows institutional interests with the strongest stake in competing for limited resources and the most experience communicating with media outlets to have the loudest voices in the news. Scientific sources, which certainly have a stake in resource allocation decisions but which often lack experience in making themselves available to the media, have weaker voices than various elected officials and other representatives of public agencies.

Methods

Our data came from extracting and coding the quotations contained in news articles in the Newsbank Electronic Index through December of 1989. Newsbank includes articles from a broad range of papers throughout the United States; it is not a comprehensive index to all papers or all articles, but probably contains the best variety of articles of any widely available index and has no known systematic biases.[18] We included all articles indexed under the headings hurricanes (subheadings damage reports, disaster aid, emergency preparedness, predictions, studies and reports) and earthquakes (subheadings damage reports, emergency preparedness, fault studies, predictions, shocks and tremors) that on examination proved to take Hurricane Hugo, the Loma Prieta earthquake, or both as their primary subject.

Two articles were excluded from the study because they were not of a type to make any use of expert sources and would skew the results: a lengthy "personal experience" feature on Hurricane Hugo, which made extensive use of comments by victims and witnesses but contained no quotes from scientific experts, and a piece about the San Francisco Giants resuming their baseball season, which was made up largely of quotations from individual players discussing their feelings about the quake and about resuming play.[19]

Although we did not begin this study with formal hypotheses, we had defined some specific research questions. First, because of the recognition that identifying and contacting appropriate expert sources for information on scientific and technical subjects is a recurring problem in science journalism, we wanted to determine whether sources used in stories about these disasters were being quoted on subjects appropriate to their expertise. Position or profession and subject of quotation were, therefore, two of the categories our content analysis used. The use of newspapers as a vehicle through which experts could disseminate practical information or instructions was also reflected in this position-subject coding.

Secondly, we were interested in exploring the ways in which the act of being quoted in a newspaper article was used to support an assertion of institutional responsibility for aspects of the disaster, either responsibility for a negative outcome that could have been avoided (blaming) or responsibility for bringing resources to bear to correct or compensate for such an outcome (claiming). So we also coded, for each quote, both institutional affiliation of the speaker and implied attribution of responsibility for either a cause of, or a solution to, problems associated with the disaster. The last category (attribution) was admittedly somewhat subjective; however, we were able to develop definitional categories here that generated an acceptable intercoder reliability level.[16] Over two-thirds of the articles could be classified as having some attributional implication.

Thirdly, we were interested in this context in comparing the coverage of these two particular disasters because they occurred closely together in time and yet contrasted in significant ways. Earthquake awareness is part of the taken-for-granted background "milieux" of California culture, but up until the time of the Loma Prieta disaster had not had much impact on the day-to-day behavior of many of those exposed. Thus, the lines of communication between journalists, experts and the general public, rarely utilized, might not be well-established. Hurricanes, however, are a "normal disaster" in the southern and southeastern U.S., with evacuations not unheard of. In addition, hurricanes do not occur without warning. Hence we expected that lines of communication for emergency purposes would be better established for the hurricane than for the earthquake, and we were interested in how this difference would affect newspapers' ability to utilize expert sources.

We decided to use quotations rather than coding all information in the articles for several reasons. First, journalists use quotes because they add to the readibility and interest of a story. We believe information contained in quotes probably packs more punch than background information woven into a story in other forms, although we know of no research that establishes this definitively. Second, since we were interested in sources of information, we needed to limit our inquiry to those "pieces" of a newspaper story that could in all cases be attributed to a specific source--and only direct and indirect quotations fall into this category. Third, we simply needed a convenient unit of analysis. Each separate quote could conveniently be treated as a single item for purposes of this study. If the same source was quoted over several paragraphs, we treated each paragraph as a separate quote; otherwise, all information attributed to the same source within a single paragraph was treated as a single quote. Only in the event that two different people were quoted in the same paragraph (unusual in standard journalistic writing) was more than one entry made for material from a single paragraph.

Results

Altogether, 1647 quotations from 118 articles were coded, 62 articles on Hurricane Hugo, 54 on the Loma Prieta earthquake, and two that consisted of comparisons between the two disasters. As Table 1 shows, elected officials were quoted almost as often as all types of experts combined, 20% versus 22% of all quotations studied.[21] However, this picture somewhat understates the predominance of government voices since many of those in the "spokesperson" category and the "other" category represented governmental institutions. Table 2 looks at institutional affiliation rather than position of individual, and reveals the overwhelming dominance of government sources (55% of all quotations coded). Contrary to our expectations, the earthquake coverage made more extensive use of quotations from all types of experts than did the hurricane coverage (Table 1). This was true despite the fact that the category "scientist" was broadly defined, including those identified as forecasters as well as meteorologists. This patterns holds for institutional affiliation as well as individual position (Table 2), with representatives of research organizations more likely to be quoted in earthquake coverage than hurricane coverage.

Scientific information, information about engineering- or construction-related issues, and instructions and advice accounted for only 4%, 4%, and 3% of the quotations coded, respectively (Table 3). By contrast, 24% of the quotations were direct observations of events, and 30% could only be classified as general comments. The "information vacuum" does not seem to have been filled with technical background information; rather, journalists tended to rely heavily on reporting of immediate events, with plans and predictions, damage reports, and discussions of resources each two or more times as prominent as scientific information.

When expert sources were used, they were slightly more likely to be quoted making a general comment as offering specialized information (Table 4). General comments account for 30% of the quotations from expert sources, while the three categories of specialized information (scientific information, instructions, and engineering information) accounted for 29% of these quotes. The plans and predictions category (which would have included comments on likely future impact and future course of either the hurricane or the earthquake) accounted for an additional 18% of the expert quotations.

Elected officials were also most likely to be quoted in the "general comment" category (37%), followed by direct observations (19%), discussions of resources (13%), and plans or predictions (12%). Spokespersons tended to be quoted in the general comment (28%), direct observation (22%), or plans and predictions (21%) categories, while victims and witnesses were usually quoted regarding a direct observation (64%). The "other" category, which includes many official voices, is also concentrated in the general comment (31%) and direct observation (21%) categories.

Table 4 makes it clear that specialized information usually comes from an appropriate expert source. However, there is a strong tendency to rely on all types of sources, including experts, for direct observations and general comments rather than a more specific category of information.

This does not appear to us to be an artifact of our coding scheme; we attempted to use the "general comment" category only where nothing else would fit. Rather, we attribute this pattern to journalists' tendency to seek out quotes on the basis of interesting language or their "fit" with the flow of a story rather than their information content.

Although even in this large sample there were not enough quotes giving specialized information to make possible a meaningful analysis of the relationship between the specific discipline of the person quoted and the subject of a quotation, we did look in a general way at the types of expert information general classes of expert sources were likely to provide. Persons classified as "scientists" were responsible for 50 out of 71 quotations (70%) giving scientific information, as well as 11 out of 42 (26%) of quotes giving instructions. Engineering-related information came from scientists and engineers about equally (14 or 24% and 18 or 31% of 58 quotations, respectively). Preparedness specialists were not responsible for any quotes giving scientific information or instructions, and for only two quotes giving engineering-related information; they tended to be used for general comments and plans or predictions. Medical doctors, psychologists and social scientists were never quoted giving scientific or technical information or instructions; they also tended to be used as sources for observations or general comments about the disasters.

Attribution of causes and solutions is given in Table 5. Not surprisingly, nature itself was identified as the cause of events reported in these articles (that is, blamed) in 56% of the quotations that identified a cause. In exactly the same proportion (56%), governmental action was identified as a solution. Action by individuals or by nongovernmental groups was relatively unimportant (15% and 18% of quotations, respectively).

Table 6 breaks down the causes identified by institutional affiliation of source used; Table 7 does the same for identified solutions. In each case, the modal agent identified as responsible for a solution corresponds to the affiliation of the source. Government sources typically identify (or imply) solutions carried out by government agencies, research institution sources identify technology or knowledge as a solution, private organizations identify action by nongovernmental groups as a solution, and those without an institutional affiliation find a solution in actions by individuals. Overwhelmingly, the largest single category of quotation in Table 6 is government sources talking about government solutions; such quotations account for 53% of all quotations that identify a solution of any sort.

These data seem to us to be strong support for the assertion that the news story is a forum in which various interests compete to establish a public definition of the situation that recognizes their own claim to primacy--and to the resources necessary to accomplish their responsibilities. This "claiming" seems to be more important than blaming, defined as seeking causes other than nature itself. However, as Table 6 shows, there is some tendency of both representatives of government institutions and those with no institutional affiliation (that is, victims and witnesses) to locate blame in other than natural causes; government institutions tend to blame the government, while individuals tend to blame other individuals or groups.

Discussion

An extensive study of how earthquake information is transmitted through society has concluded that there is a strong tendency for people to want to "let the government do it."[33] Naturally, we expect government to step in when it can take actions to alleviate suffering and reduce further risk. But this attitude can be counterproductive when reliance on the "sure" remedy of government action prevents individuals from taking precautions. Faith in government responsibility in this area might thus cost lives. The extent to which the use of the news media as a forum for making claims about institutional--largely governmental--responsibility contributes to this attitude is, of course, only a matter for speculation. But we believe on the basis of our research that this possibility is worth further exploration.

Newspaper articles analyzed for this study make regular, but limited, use of experts in reporting natural disaster news. Further, quotes from experts are often general comments or observations of current events. The opportunity to use technical experts to provide scientific background information and to use experts on preparedness to minimize the opportunities for further harm do not seem to be fully exploited by journalists. Instead, government voices clamor for attention about government solutions, and occasionally blame one another for insufficiencies. Contrary to our expectation, the hurricane coverage did not make as extensive use of expert sources as the earthquake coverage, suggesting special attention should be given to strengthening the lines of communication between hurricane experts and the press. Although the unpredictable nature of meteorological events and the state of our scientific knowledge about them put an upper bound on what expert sources can tell us, we could undoubtedly make better use of what expert knowledge is available.

The results of this study have important implications for practicing journalists. Conscious attention should be focused on the issue of "voices in the news" in natural disaster reporting, just as in other circumstances in which overreliance on official sources has come to be recognized as problematic. Expert sources should be cultivated at times other than the aftermath of particular disasters. When these sources are available, journalists should make choices about material to be quoted that maximize the effectiveness of these authorities, rather than using general comments from experts simply to "round out" a story. Simply substituting scientific "official sources" for government ones may not always be the best way to serve the public interest, but more care can be taken to include the greatest possible variety of voices in coverage as a whole.

This study also suggests that more research attention should be paid to the issue of how the quoted claims of news sources helps to shape the way the world is understood by readers. Future research we plan in this area will look at broadcast coverage of these same types of disasters, as well as the relationship between the value systems of readers and their responses to new information about risks. As this study has tried to illustrate, the socially constructed character of news events applies to events in the natural world just as it does to events in the social world. Accounts of either are refractions, not reflections, of events in the "real world." As such, they may contribute to feelings of either helplessness or powerfulness on the part of the general public.

1. Gaye Tuchman, *Making News: A Study in the Social Construction of Reality*. (New York: Free Press, 1978).

2. For a discussion of the concept of "retrospective reinterpretation," see Alfred Schutz, *On Phenomenology and Social Relations*. Helmut R. Wagner, ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

3. See Joel Best, ed., *Images of Issues: Typifying Contemporary Social Problems*. (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1989).

4. Everett M. Rogers, *Proceedings of the Committe on Disasters and the Mass Media Workshop*. (Washington, DC: National Academy of Sciences, 1980).

5. *Time*, October 2, 1989.

6. *Time*, October 30, 1989.

7. Sharon Dunwoody, "The Scientist as Source," *in* Sharon M. Friedman, Sharon Dunwoody, and Carol L. Rogers, eds. *Scientists and Journalists: Reporting Science as News*. (New York: Free Press, 1986); Sharon Dunwoody and Michael Ryan, "The Credible Scientific Source," *Journalism Quarterly* 64:21-27 (1987).

8. R. Gordon Shepherd, "Science News of Controversy: The Case of Marijuana," *Journalism Monographs* No. 62 (1979); "Selectivity of Sources: Reporting the Marijuana Controversy," *Journal of Communication* 31(2):129-137 (1981).

9. For examples see Roger Silverstone, "Science and the Media: The Case of Television," *in* S. J. Doorman, ed., *Images of Science: Scientific Practice and the Public* (Brookfield, VT: Gower); and Susanna Hornig, "Television's 'NOVA' and the Construction of Scientific Truth," *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 7:11-23 (1990).

10. Lee Wilkins and Philip Patterson, "Risk Analysis and the Construction of News," *Journal of Communication* 37(3):80-92 (1987).

11. "Media Coverage and Public Opinion on Scientific Controversies," *Journal of Communication* 31(2):106-115 (1981).

12. Oene Wiegman, Jan M. Gutteling, Henk Boer and Reinder J. Houwen, "Newspaper Coverage of Hazards and the Reactions of Readers," *Journalism Quarterly* 66:846-852 (1990).

13. See Susanna Hornig, "New Frames and the Nature of Truth: The Effects of Quotation Use and Controversy in Stories About Science," *Southwestern Mass Communication Journal* 5(2):41-49 (1989); "The Frankenstein Effect: Risk, Power, and Perceived Story Emphasis for Stories About Science," paper to be presented at annual meeting, International Communication Association, Dublin, Ireland, June 1990.

14. For documentation see Dorothy Nelkin, Selling Science: How the Press Covers Science and Technology. (New York: W. H. Freeman, 1987).

15. John Ledingham and Lynne Masel-Walters, "Written on the Wind: The Mass Media and Hurricane Alicia," Newspaper Research Journal 6(2):50-58 (1985).

16. Rahul Sood, Geoffrey Stockdale, and Everett M. Rogers, "How the News Media Operate in Natural Disasters," Journal of Communication 37(3):27-41 (1987).

17. Enrico L. Quarantelli, "The Social Science Study of Disasters and Mass Communication," in Lynne Masel-Walters, Lee Wilkins, and Tim Walters, eds., Bad Tidings: Communication and Catastrophe. (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1989).

18. Newsbank indexes articles from a broad variety of newspapers and other periodicials from various locations throughout the United States. Local as well as larger papers are included. Not all articles are indexed; articles falling into one of 17 main categories of news considered by Newsbank to be of national interest are emphasized. Wire service articles are excluded to avoid duplication. Locally originated articles later picked up by a wire service would, of course, appear once in their original form if published in an indexed paper, but stories originated by wire service reporters are missing from the data.

19. Such personal experience features also contribute to the "constructed reality" of the events studied; however, we did not want to understate the degree of reliance on expert sources in "hard news" by including these articles that were clearly from a different genre of story.

20. The percent of agreement after practice between coder 1 and coder 2 was .86 overall; between coder 1 and coder 3 it was .80.

21. Significance levels of chi-square tests of the differences between the various distributions reported in Tables 1 and 4 are given on the tables and are consistently high due to the large sample sizes involved.

22. Ralph H. Turner, Joanne M. Nigg, and Denise Heller Paz, Waiting for Disaster: Earthquake Watch in California. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

Table 1. Sources quoted in news articles about Hurricane Hugo and the Loma Prieta earthquake. "Other" category includes unidentified "officials," police and firefighters, ham radio operators, journalists, and unidentified or unknown sources. Comparison between hurricane and earthquake distributions significant at $P \leq .001$ (chi-square = 86.14; df = 4).

	Hurricane		Earthquake		All articles	
Elected official	183	(19%)	131	(21%)	322	(20%)
Spokesperson	112	(11%)	43	(7%)	169	(10%)
Victim/witness	118	(12%)	51	(8%)	170	(10%)
Expert						
Preparedness specialist	28	(3%)	50	(8%)	86	(5%)
Scientist	94	(10%)	90	(14%)	185	(11%)
Engineer	15	(2%)	47	(8%)	62	(4%)
M.D., psych., social sci.	7	(1%)	18	(3%)	25	(2%)
All experts	144	(15%)	205	(33%)	358	(22%)
Other	422	(43%)	195	(31%)	628	(38%)
Total	979		625		1647	

Table 2. Institutional affiliation of quoted sources. "No institution" entries are primarily victims or witnesses speaking as individuals. Comparison between hurricane and earthquake distributions significant at P $\leq$ .001 (hospital category combined with unknowns; chi-square = 42.21; df = 5).

	Hurricane		Earthquake		All articles	
Government (nonresearch)	542	(55%)	342	(55%)	913	(55%)
Research	106	(11%)	108	(17%)	215	(13%)
Private company	102	(10%)	69	(11%)	183	(11%)
Private nonprofit	47	(5%)	9	(1%)	56	(3%)
Hospital	0	(0%)	5	(1%)	5	(0%)
No institution	139	(14%)	51	(8%)	191	(12%)
Unknown	43	(4%)	41	(7%)	84	(5%)
Total	979		625		1647	

Table 3. Subjects of quotations used in stories. Comparison between hurricane and earthquake distributions significant at P ≤ .001 (chi-square = 129.46; df = 9).

	Hurricane		Earthquake		All articles	
General comments	226	(23%)	247	(40%)	499	(30%)
Direct observ.	275	(28%)	114	(18%)	392	(24%)
Plans, predictions	151	(15%)	84	(13%)	243	(15%)
Damage reports	145	(15%)	32	(5%)	178	(11%)
Resources	76	(8%)	38	(6%)	115	(7%)
Scientific info.	27	(3%)	44	(7%)	71	(4%)
Engineering info.	21	(2%)	37	(6%)	58	(4%)
Instructions	35	(4%)	6	(1%)	42	(3%)
Past disasters	12	(1%)	15	(2%)	30	(2%)
Deaths/injuries	11	(1%)	8	(1%)	19	(1%)
Total	979		625		1647	

Table 4. Subject of quotation by type of source quoted. Comparison of distributions for various source types significant at $P \leq .001$ with last five subject categories collapsed (chi-square = 350.76; df = 20).

	Elected	Spokes.	Victim	Expert	Other	Total
General comments	119 (37%)	47 (28%)	34 (20%)	107 (30%)	192 (31%)	499 (30%)
Direct observ.	62 (19%)	37 (22%)	109 (64%)	50 (14%)	134 (21%)	392 (24%)
Plans, predict.	38 (12%)	35 (21%)	7 (4%)	64 (18%)	99 (16%)	243 (15%)
Damage reports	34 (11%)	18 (11%)	11 (7%)	14 (4%)	101 (16%)	178 (11%)
Resources	41 (13%)	14 (8%)	5 (3%)	10 (3%)	45 (7%)	115 (7%)
Scientific info.	1 (0%)	3 (2%)	2 (1%)	56 (16%)	9 (1%)	71 (4%)
Engineering info.	7 (2%)	4 (2%)	1 (1%)	34 (10%)	12 (2%)	58 (4%)
Instructions	17 (5%)	3 (2%)	0 (0%)	12 (3%)	10 (2%)	42 (3%)
Past disasters	1 (0%)	7 (4%)	1 (1%)	8 (2%)	13 (2%)	30 (2%)
Deaths/injuries	2 (1%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)	3 (1%)	13 (2%)	19 (1%)
Total	322	169	170	358	628	1647

Table 5. Attributions identified in quotations studied. (No attributions were identified in the remaining 498 quotations.)

	Identified as	
Agent	Cause	Solution
Individual	52 (9%)	79 (15%)
Government	89 (15%)	302 (56%)
Nature	342 (56%)	11 (2%)
Construction	57 (9%)	27 (5%)
Other human groups	54 (9%)	95 (18%)
Technology/knowledge	17 (3%)	24 (4%)
Total	611	538

Table 6. Types of causes identified by sources with different institutional affiliations.

	Agent identified						
Source affiliation	Indiv.	Govt.	Nature	Const.	Group	Tech.	Total
Government	30	72	121	29	17	10	279
Research	0	0	98	15	13	5	131
Private company	4	0	42	4	8	2	60
Private nonprofit	2	0	11	0	1	0	14
Hospital	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
None	14	5	37	5	14	0	75
Unknown	2	12	32	4	1	0	51
Total	52	89	342	57	54	17	611

Table 7. Types of solutions identified by sources with different institutional affiliations.

	Agent identified						
Source affiliation	Indiv.	Govt.	Nature	Const.	Group	Tech.	Total
Government	32	283	4	20	14	4	357
Research	10	6	3	1	14	18	52
Private company	15	2	1	6	44	1	69
Private nonprofit	3	3	0	0	15	0	21
Hospital	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
None	17	4	3	0	8	1	33
Unknown	2	4	0	0	0	0	6
Total	79	302	11	27	95	24	538

THE GOVERNMENT-MEDIA RELATIONSHIP AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE RECYCLING ISSUE IN BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

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THE GOVERNMENT-MEDIA RELATIONSHIP AT THE LOCAL LEVEL: NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE RECYCLING ISSUE IN BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

> The Mayor is pleased to announce that Bloomington and Monroe County's second Tox-Away Day, held Saturday, April 29, enabled 255 citizens to safely dispose of household hazardous wastes. "Citizens are aware of the need to get these itemsout of their homes to to then keep them out of the landfill," the Mayor said (St. John, 1989).
>
> A total of 255 Monroe County residents took advantage of the second annual "Tox-Away Day" on Saturday to safely dispose of hazardous household waste, said Bloomington Mayor Tomi Allison (Creek, 1989).

These two paragraphs are examples of how the recycling issue in Bloomington, Indiana, is being handled--the first paragraph is the local government's version, and the second paragraph is the local media's version. The similarities between these two paragraphs about this particular recycling story are obvious, and with the exception of stylistic changes, the information in both versions is the same. The question arises, however, if these paragraphs are typical of the way the Bloomington media handle information coming from the local government.

One of the criticisms of current government and media research is that most of the studies have been done on the national level (e.g. Allen, 1983; American Press Institute, 1989; Blumler and Gurevitch, 1981; Hess, 1984; Sigal, 1973). These studies have focused primarily on the relationship between the national press (e.g. newspapers with national reputations and the television networks) and federal officials (e.g. the president, congressmen and senators) when more attention should be paid to local-level government and media relationships (e.g. the small newspaper and the mayor or city council) (e.g. Weaver, and Elliott, 1985; Witt, 1974; Fico, 1983; Sachsman, 1976; Paletz et. al, 1971). This study seeks to help to fill in the gap made by too many national-level government and media studies and too few local-level government and media studies.

Another complaint concerning media and government research is that it is too tied to studying the media-government relationship during elections (e.g. American Press Institute, 1989; Clarke and Evans, 1983; Davis, 1989; Hershey, 1989; Lichter et. al., 1988; Ratzan, 1989; Schoenbach, 1986; Weaver et. al., 1986; Weaver et. al., 1981). Critics argue more studies should be done to find out more about the relationship between media and government on a more routine basis concerning non-election issues. Rather than focusing on elections that occur once every two to four years, more research should be done to find out how media and government operate on a daily basis concerning local and less campaign-oriented issues (e.g. environmental issues). This study seeks to help fill in this gap as well.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study focused on the following research questions: What is the relationship between a local newspaper and the local government--adversarial, cooperative, or both? How influential is the local government in the coverage of government-related issues by the local media? How dependent are local media on the local government as a source for news? Is the relationship between government and media different on the local level as opposed to the national level? Are the findings from this study consistent with other locally-focused media studies?

RELATED STUDIES

Media researchers have devised various descriptions to explain the relationship between media and government. Researchers like Karp (1989) and Sigal (1973) believe the media's relationship with government is a dependent one in which reporters rely heavily upon government sources. Graber (1989) sees this relationship as more evenly matched and more of a tug of war between the media and government. Blumler and Gurevitch (1981) and Fico (1983) argue that the media have a more cooperative/exchange relationship in which both sides are mutually dependent and mutually adaptive. But other researchers like Weaver and Elliott (1980) would argue that labeling the media-government relationship is not that clear cut. These researchers believe the news judgments of journalists work against the influence prominent government news sources have on media in certain situations (Weaver and Elliott, 1980).

One of the earliest studies on media-government relationships was conducted by Delmer Dunn during a time when there was a relatively small base of previous research upon which to build (Dunn, 1969). Therefore, Dunn cautioned that his findings may be more "impressionistic and tentative then would be desirable" (Dunn, 1969, preface). Using nonstuctured, focused interviews as his primary source, Dunn talked with Wisconsin state officials and political newspapers about their views on their roles, their definition of news, and their responsibilities. He concluded that the press had the resources that enabled it to have a potential impact on policy making. Dunn also concluded, however, that public policy making is a "complex amalgam of diverse components" and it would be a mistake to suggest that any one of the components--in this case the press--is central (Dunn, 1969, p. 171).

Stephen Hess (1984) spent a year inside the press offices of five federal agencies in Washington, D.C., and gathered data designed to better explain the relationship between the press and government. Hess examined the government's involvement in producing information about itself by looking at the organization of press offices and their routine functions (e.g. governmental briefings and handouts). He also studied the personnel who staffed those offices and spoke on the government's behalf as well as the press officers' relations with print and television journalists. Hess differed with the conventional wisdom about the degree to which government press operations may or may not manipulate public opinion. He found little evidence that press offices are "propaganda machines distorting the nation's public dialogue" (Hess, 1984, p. vii).

While Hess argued that press offices are not propaganda machines, Doris Graber (1989) supported the conventional wisdom that "the influence of mass media on contemporary American politics remains pervasive and profound" (Graber, 1989, p. xiii). Graber examined the mass media as institutions in the American political system and their "forceful" influence in a variety of political situations (e.g. elections and the interplay between the media and the presidency, Congress and the courts) (Graber, 1989, p. xiv).

Clarke and Evans' research (1983) on media-government relationships during campaigns focused on the congressional race rather than the presidential race. Their study examined how newspapers covered the 1978 races for the U.S. House of Representatives from a nationwide sample of 82 contested congressional races. They argued that their findings revealed a grim and alarming picture of press performance. They concluded journalistic habits hampered political competition and limited voters' understanding of campaigns. They also argued that incumbents enjoy an advantage in news coverage especially during hotly contested races and that editorial endorsements are often written without reasoned argument and almost always in support of the incumbents (Clarke and Evans, 1983).

David Paletz et. al., studied the relationship between local print media and local government by comparing newspaper accounts with direct observations of city council meetings. They found that media coverage of the city council reinforced the authority of local governing bodies (Paletz et. al., 1971). Similar studies have also reached the same conclusion--the balance between the media and government tends to tilt more toward the government. William Martin and Michael Singletary's study focused on Pennsylvania newspapers' treatment of news releases issued by the Department of Auditor General and found that newspapers were likely to publish the news releases verbatim (Martin and Singletary, 1981; McKerns, 1985).

An earlier study by David Sachsman (1976) also supported the theory that media are heavily dependent on government sources (i.e. news releases) for their coverage of environmental issues. Sachsman found that more than half of the environmental stories published in the San Francisco area were based on press releases from government agencies (Sachsman, 1976). Sachsman's study is one example of the several studies that have focused on the the media and government's role involving environmental issues in particular.

Other environmental-related media studies have focused on the media's effects and influence on the public. Novic and Sandman (1974) conducted a study which revealed that high media users considered themselves less informed on environmental issues and viewed those issues as less serious. High media users also preferred solutions to environmental problems that were less personal (Novic and Sandman, 1974).

Jeffrey Smith's 1983 study criticized news media's negligence in covering the Environmental Protection Agency because the stories coming out of the EPA were not what the reporters considered to be "newsworthy" even though toxicity levels were rising at several sites (Smith, 1983). Smith's findings echoed David Rubin and David Sachs' 1973 study in which they criticized the news media for their performance in how they reported environmental problems. Rubin and Sachs examined the media's interrelationships with other agencies in combating environmental problems and found that the media withheld information citizens needed to make decisions (Rubin and Sachs, 1973).

Like Rubin and Sachs, Bowman and Hanaford (1977) argued that the media should have a cooperative role with government in addressing environmental problems. Bowman and Hanaford saw media's commitment to policy issues as critical because the public relied heavily on them for information upon which to base action (Bowman and Hanaford, 1977).

And Witt's 1972 study supported Bowman and Hanaford's claims. Witt found a positive correlation between the adoption of shoreland regulations and the amount of news coverage concerning that environmental issue (Witt, 1972). Public opinion and media effects, however, are not the focus of this study. Instead, the focus of this study will be a combination of analyzing the relationship between a government agency and the media, and studying how that relationship affects the way the media cover issues pertaining to that agency.

METHODS

This study analyzed the relationship between the local media and the local city government concerning the coverage of environmental issues affecting the local community. The city was Bloomington, Indiana; the local government was Bloomington's Department of Public Works; the local medium studied was the Herald-Times (formerly the Herald-Telephone), and the issue was the recycling of solid waste (e.g. glass, aluminum, paper, and plastic) in Bloomington. This study analyzed the relationship between the Herald-Times and the Department of Public Works to see what type of relationship existed--adversarial or cooperative--and how much influence the government agency had on how the recycling issue is covered by the Bloomington newspaper.

The disposal of solid waste became a salient issue for Bloomington city officials during 1989. The current landfill, owned by Monroe County and utilized by the city of Bloomington, was reaching its capacity, and efforts were underway by both Monroe County and Bloomington city officials to formulate plans for future waste disposal in the area (Higgs, 1989).

Because dumping space at the Monroe County landfill was rapidly disappearing, city of Bloomington officials began encouraging their citizens to recycle by establishing curbside collection service in some neighborhoods and adding locations where residents could drop off glass and aluminum items for recycling (Higgs, 1989). Jane St. John was hired by the city in January 1989 to coordinate and promote the city's recycling program and increase citizen participation in the recycling effort. Because the solid-waste problem in Bloomington had reached the crisis stage, recycling had become a newsworthy issue that warranted regular coverage by the Herald-Times (Higgs interview, 1989).

The primary sources for this study were the news releases issued by the Department of Public Works and the news articles published by the Herald Times from January through November 1989. The study also included unstructured and focused interviews (Appendices A and B) from Department of Public Works Environmental Projects coordinator Jane St. John, Herald-Times environmental reporter Steven Higgs, and Herald-Times columnist Jim Underwood.

The data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The issues mentioned in news releases and news stories were ranked (e.g. household hazardous waste, recycling, landfill space, and economics) as were the sources (e.g. Mayor Tomi Allison, Monroe County Commissioner Tim Tilton, and Bloomington Environmental Projects Coordinator Jane St. John). Using the issue and source rankings from the news releases and the news stories, Spearman's rho correlation was used to test statistically how similar the newspaper agendas pertaining to recycling were to the news release agendas sent to the newspaper.

Qualitative methods were used to analyze the interviews to determine the type of relationship the Herald-Times had with the Bloomington Department of Public Works. This qualitative approach served to complement the statistical analysis and to determine if the quantitative results provided a true picture of the relationship between the newspaper and the government.

RESULTS

On the surface it appears that the Herald-Times did not rely heavily on news releases from the Bloomington Department of Public Works in order to cover the recycling issue. The Herald-Times published forty-two stories related to the recycling issue between January and November of 1989, compared to only six news releases sent by Jane St. John. Of the twenty-one issues identified in the news stories and news releases, nine of the issues (39 percent) appeared in the news stories but not in the news releases. While citizen participation in the recycling program was the top ranked issue in the news releases, decreasing space at the Monroe County landfill received the most attention in the newspaper stories.

Table #1 about here

Bloomington Mayor Tomi Allison and Environmental Projects Coordinator Jane St. John were cited the most in the government news releases while Monroe County commissioner Tim Tilton and Monroe County Attorney Jim Trulock were cited the most by the Herald-Times. There is some evidence of the city's influence on setting the media agenda despite the small number of news releases issued by that agency. While Mayor Tomi Allison ranked low as a source cited in the news stories, Jane St. John, was the third highest ranked source for the newspaper stories (see Table #2).

Table #2 about here

Comparing the ranking of the news releases with the ranking of the news stories using the Spearman's rho correlation reveals that the Department of Public Works had little influence on news coverage of the recycling issue based solely on its news releases. The Spearman's rho between issues mentioned in the news releases compared to the issues mentioned in the news stories equaled .27 (Table #1). The Spearman's rho between sources cited in the news releases compared to the sources cited in the news stories was slightly higher at .35 (Table #2). But because only three sources were cited in the news releases, compared to 17 sources in the news stories. Therefore, this Spearman's rho does not signify a great deal.

It would be premature, however, to conclude that these low ratings are solid proof that the Herald-Times covered the recycling issue in Bloomington practically free from government influence. One reason for the low Spearman rho scores was because of the small number of government news releases. Jane St. John rarely uses news releases because it is more effective for her to promote the city's recycling program through interpersonal channels such as contacting the Herald-Times reporters by telephone (St. John interview, 1989).

> In a city as small as Bloomington, it is easier for me to contact the media by phone. They are more accessible that way (St. John interview, 1989).

The "they" in St. John's quote refers to her two main contacts at the Herald-Times--reporter Steven Higgs and columnist Jim Underwood. Steven Higgs has been a reporter with the Herald-Times since 1985. His reporting responsibilities include covering county government, the courts and some environmental issues. He is a native of Bloomington and a graduate of Indiana University-Bloomington with undergraduate degrees in political science and pyschology. Higgs also received his masters degree from I.U. in 1986 after being hired at the Herald-Times.

Jim Underwood has a variety of responsibilities at the Herald-Times--columnist, music reviewer and obituary writer. Underwood came to Bloomington primarily to pursue a Ph.D. in music at Indiana University. Upon completion of his doctorate he has stayed in Bloomington and worked at the Herald-Times for the past three years while pursuing a career in music composition

As a part-time employee at the Herald-Times, Underwood is limited in the amount of time he can devote to his various writing responsibilities. Underwood says his interpersonal contact with St. John has made his job a lot easier.

> Jane does an extremely good job because, as you can imagine, I don't have the time to go hit the streets. I don't do that kind of thing. Everything I do is over the phone... The Environmental Projects Coordinator..has been really useful, I think, to all of us on the paper because [we] can get answers to questions and the information we need about local environmental problems and how to solve them.

One of Underwood's responsibilities at the paper is to write the

"Hotline" column, a consumer advice column in which readers write or call in questions ranging from how to get refunds for defective mail-order items to how to send letters to Cuban leader Fidel Castro. While on the surface, the column is designed to answer questions from the Bloomington readers, in many cases the questions pertaining to the recycling issue are planted by Jane St. John (St. John, 1989; Underwood, 1989).

For example, the issue of biodegradable plastic (Table #1) was never mentioned in any of St. John's news releases. However, that issue became the focus of two of Underwood's "Hotline" columns as a result of several telephone conversations St. John had with Underwood (St. John interview, 1989; Underwood interview, 1989). In both cases no reader actually wrote or called requesting recycling information. Instead, the questions and answers were posed by St. John herself (St. John interview, 1989; Underwood interview, 1989).

Was the relationship between the city and the newspaper concerning the recycling issue different from media-government relationship on the national level? This study shows a more interpersonal relationship between the local media and the local government than between the national media and government. On the national level, government agencies are more dependent upon news releases and less dependent on interpersonal methods in order to promote their agencies' programs and policies (Hess, 1984).

What was the relationship between the Herald-Times and the city's environmental projects coordinator? How influential was Jane St. John in setting the agenda for the newspaper in its coverage of the recycling issue? How dependent was the Herald-Times on St. John as a source for news?

There was no evidence of an adversarial relationship between the

Herald-Times and Jane St. John. In fact, this study supports the conclusions of researchers like Karp (1989) and Sigal (1973) who argue that media's relationship with government is a dependent one in which reporters rely heavily upon government sources.

St. John's comments also reinforce the conclusion that the Herald-Times is dependent on the local government for information on recycling issues. The Department of Public Works' Environmental Projects section is responsible for the annual Tox-away day, a day set aside for Bloomington citizens to bring their household hazardous waste for proper disposal in an effort to prevent that toxic waste from being dumped into the county landfill (St. John interview, 1989). No Herald-Times reporter was present for the actual day. Instead, the newspaper covered the story by basing its information strictly from the news release written and distributed by St. John (St. John interview, 1989). The similarities of the news release written by St. John and the news story published by the Herald-Times are striking, as illustrated in the introduction of this study.

Higgs spends the bulk of his time covering meetings and providing neutral and objective reports on the activities of the county and city's elected officials. He believes it is his responsibility "to help inform people about issues and topics that directly affect their lives particularly with respect to elected public officials so they can make informed decisions about who [are] and who [are] not doing their jobs" (Higgs interview, 1989). Because these meetings are scheduled on a regular basis, there is little need for the government to issue very many press releases. As a result, Higgs also relies heavily on interpersonal methods to get information for his stories and lists St. John as one of the top four government sources used by him in his coverage of recycling issues (Higgs interview, 1989).

In the coverage of recycling issues, Higgs relies primarily on the government for his information because "the nature of the business is such that we tend to rely perhaps a little too heavily on official sources" (Higgs interview, 1989). Underwood also believes that the Herald-Times depends too much on government sources for its stories.

While St. John praised the Herald-Times reporters for making her job of promoting the city's recycling program a lot easier, she is concerned that the newspaper's cooperative attitude may be too much of a good thing. St. John is convinced that the Herald-Times relies too much on her comments and should do more interpretative and analytical reporting in order to better educate the Bloomington residents about the seriousness of the solid waste disposal problems in the city (St. John interview, 1989).

> I think if the newspaper is interested in being a helpful supplier of information to people it would be good if [it] could do an analysis of the whole situation as it now stands including recycling, the county's role, the city's role...because right now people are just getting a linear, as-it-comes-up description from the daily news, and that's difficult for a citizen to accumulate and store and process (St. John interview, 1989).

The quantitative findings of this study show that the local media are not greatly influenced by the government, and the media tend toset their own agenda in covering the local government. However, by paying closer attention to the qualitative data (interviews), this study supports the findings from other locally-focused media studies that the local government does have a great deal of influence in setting the media's reporting agenda (e.g. Weaver and Elliott, 1985; Bowman and Hanaford, 1977; Witt, 1972; Paletz et. al, 1971).

CONCLUSIONS

Quantitatively, there is little evidence from this study to support the hypothesis that the media are greatly influenced by the government in their coverage of governmental issues. But by using the qualitative method of interviewing, more support of media dependence on government in the coverage of issues is found. This study also points to evidence that some government agencies have more influence on the media than others, and that influence can be documented using quantitative methods.

As far as this analysis is concerned, it appears that the Monroe County Commissioners have more influence in setting the media agenda concerning recycling/solid waste issues than the Bloomington city's Department of Public Works/Environmental Projects Coordinator. A closer look at the sources (Table #3) cited in the newspaper stories reveal that a majority of the sources were **county** officials rather than **city** officials, and most of the sources were members of a special county committee created to develop short term and long term plans to solve the county's solid waste crisis (Higgs, 1989).

Table #3 about here

A closer look at the actual news stories themselves reveals that most of the quotes and information came from the coverage of these committee meetings. This finding confirms Higgs' assertion that most of the recycling stories he covers are mainly"people-met-last-night-and-this-is-what-happened" reports (Higgs interview, 1989).

If the issues in the minutes of these county committee meetings were ranked and compared with the issues covered in the Herald-Times, the Spearman's rho would probably be significantly higher. In fact, it is predicted that the Herald-Times would mirror the agenda of the county committee's meetings on the solid waste issues just as it was revealed in Weaver and Elliott's 1985 study that this same newspaper mirrored the agenda of the city council meetings. The Spearman's rho for Weaver and Elliott's study was .84--a significantly high correlation.

Not only were the majority of the sources cited in the Herald-Times stories county officials, almost all of the sources were government officials from the county, city or state level (Table #3). While the quantitative data from the news releases did not support the influence of the city government on the Herald-Times coverage of recycling issues, it did reveal that based on the ranking of sources, there was a significant level of influence on the county level.

The qualitative analysis did uncover substantial dependence on government on the part of the Herald-Times in its coverage of recycling issues. Quantitative methods proved to be ineffective in detecting this dependent relationship in this particular case because few quantifiable methods were used by the city's Environmental Projects coordinator to get media coverage of the recycling issue.

Based on this study, it appears that in a small-town setting the government and media rely on more interpersonal means of relating with each other. Therefore, future locally-focused media and government studies should incorporate both qualitative and quantitative analyses to get a clearer picture of the true relationship of the media and government on a local level.

Table #1

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODEBOOK:
RECYCLING COVERAGE IN BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA
ISSUES AND TOPICS

Issues/Topics	News Releases		News Stories	
	Mentions[a]	Ranking[b]	Mentions	Ranking
current landfill/ solid waste disposal	5	6.5	269	1
economics/funding	2	12	204	2
recycling	10	3.5	148	3
administration/labor	0	17	123	4
participation (in recycling programs)	17	1	63	5.5
state regulations/laws	0	17	63	5.5
compost ban	0	17	54	7
new landfill	0	17	46	8
education	5	6.5	32	9
biodegradable plastic	0	17	27	10
household hazardous waste	16	2	22	11
Stone Belt recycling center	3	10.5	21	12
Indiana University	0	17	17	13
environment	4	9	16	14
Tox-Away Day	10	3.5	15	15
returnable bottles	0	17	14	16
curbside pick up	5	6.5	8	17
Play it Clean	3	10.5	3	18.5
media/promotion	0	17	3	18.5
littering	0	17	2	20.5
April-Recycling month	5	6.5	2	20.5
newspaper glut	1	13.5	0	22.5
Clean Team	1	13.5	0	22.5

Spearman's rho between the two sets of rankings equals .27

[a] "Mentions" refers to the number of mentions the various topics received in the news releases or news stories on a 23-issue/topic scale.

[b] "Ranking" means the relative amount of coverage devoted to each topic on a 23-issue/topic scale. The ranking is based on the "mentions" category. Therefore, current landfill/solid waste disposal issues received the most coverage by the newspaper, while participation in the recycling program received the most coverage in the news releases.

Table #2

CONTENT ANALYSIS CODEBOOK:
RECYCLING COVERAGE IN BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA
SOURCES

Sources	News Releases		News Stories	
	Mentions	Ranking	Mentions	Ranking
Tim Tilton	0	10.5	66	1
Jim Trulock	0	10.5	56	2
Jane St. John	4	2	46	3
Elbert Johns	0	10.5	39	4
Iris Kiesling	0	10.5	34	5
Dean Pennington	0	10.5	22	6
Joyce Poling	0	10.5	17	7
Gary Kent	0	10.5	15	8
Michael List	0	10.5	14	9.5
Mayor Tomi Allison	7	1	14	9.5
Vi Simpson	0	10.5	10	11
Mark Kruzan	0	10.5	9	12
Warren Henegar	0	10.5	7	13
Rodney Brown	0	10.5	4	14
Phil Rogers	0	10.5	1	16
Kelly Boatman/Keep America Beautiful	2	3	1	16
Pam Service	0	10.5	1	16

Spearman's rho between the two sets of rankings equals .35

[a] "Mentions" refers to the number of times the various sources were mentioned in the news releases or news stories on a 17-item scale.

[b] "Ranking" means the relative amount of coverage devoted to each source on a 17-item scale. The ranking is based on the "mentions" category. Therefore, Mayor Tomi Allison received the most mentions and the highest ranking in the news releases while Monroe County Commissioner Tim Tilton received the highest ranking and the most mentions in the news stories.

Table #3

AFFILIATIONS OF SOURCES ON THE BLOOMINGTON RECYCLING ISSUE

Source	Official Position
Tim Tilton	Monroe County Commissioner; Monroe County Solid Waste Committee chairman
Jim Trulock	Deputy Monroe County Attorney
Jane St. John	Environmental Projects Coordinator, City of Bloomington
Elbert Johns	Stonebelt Recycling Center director; Monroe County Solid Waste Committee member
Iris Kiesling	Bloomington City Council member; Monroe County Solid Waste Committee member
Dean Pennington	Monroe County Landfill Director
Joyce Poling	Monore County Commission Vice President
Gary Kent	Indiana University Physical Plant Director; Monroe County Solid Waste Committee member
Michael List	Monroe County Health Board President; Monroe County Solid Waste Committee member
Tomi Allison	Mayor of Bloomington
Vi Simpson	Indiana Senate
Mark Kruzan	Indiana House of Representatives
Warren Henegar	Monroe County Commissioner
Rodney Brown	Bloomington City Council member
Phil Rogers	Monroe County Commission President
Kelly Boatman	National Keep America Beautiful campaign
Pam Service	Bloomington City Council member

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW OUTLINE FOR REPORTERS

Steven Higgs, environmental reporter, Herald Times, Bloomington, Indiana

Jim Underwood, columnist, Herald Times, Bloomington, Indiana

1. What is your official title with the newspaper?
2. Brief background (e.g. education, years of experience, how long with the paper, first position with the paper, any other media experience besides print)
3. What are your responsibilities?
4. What is your definition of news?
5. What is your role as a reporter (e.g. neutral information transmitter; translator/interpreter of government to the people; representative of the public; participant in policy making; watchdog of government) (Dunn, 1969)?
6. Describe your duties in the course of an average day.
7. Who/what is your main source of information for your stories?
8. How do you get your information (e.g. via telephone, news releases)?
9. How many news releases do you get per week? Phone conversations? Meetings (dates and times and locations)?
10. Who usually initiates the contact? The agency/source? The reporter?
11. How many environmental stories do you usually write per week?
12. Discuss the stories you are currently working on now.
13. Describe the chain of command at the H-T. Do you select your own stories? Who decides where the story will run in the paper?
14. Do you consider yourself an advocate of environmental issues? Do you use your position as reporter to get those issues to the public?
15. How did you cover environmental issues BEFORE Jane St. John took her position in January 1989?
16. Has the new position of environment projects coordinator made your job easier?
17. Do you get a lot of public feedback from your stories? From your news sources? Which is more common, feedback from the public or from news sources such as Jane St. John?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW OUTLINE FOR PUBLIC OFFICIAL

Jane St. John, Environment Projects Coordinator,
Bloomington Recycling Project, Department of Public Works,

1. Brief background (e.g. past experience, previous related jobs).
2. What is your role and your responsibilities?
3. What is your view of the role of the media (e.g. inform the people about and interpret government activity; protect the public interest; communicate public demands to government; execute a variety of miscellaneous roles) (Dunn, 1969)?
4. How many times a week do you have contact with the media? How many tiems a week are you interviewed?
5. How do you communicate with the media (e.g. news releases, telephone calls, meetings, news conferences). Which of these methods is most effective and why?
6. Who initiates the contact? You or the reporter?
7. What problems do you see in dealing with the media?
8. Do you think the H-T is covering your concerns adequately and fairly?
9. Why do you feel it is important to keep in contact with the media?

The Impact of Group Ownership on Organizational Professionalism

by

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Abstract

Results of a national survey of 208 editors at 58 daily newspapers found no difference between group-owned and independent papers across seven of eight indicators of organizational professionalism. However, when the group-owned papers were examined separately, two characteristics of the parent companies of the group-owned papers -- aggregate circulation and number of papers in the group -- were significant predictors of papers' scores on four the eight indicators of organizational professionalism.

The Impact of Group Ownership on Organizational Professionalism

Two of the most enduring issues in mass media research are 1) the consequences of group (or "chain") ownership for mass communication processes and 2) the nature of professionalism in journalism. Mass media scholars have examined both issues extensively. Investigations of group ownership date back at least three decades to Borstel's study (1956) of group ownership and opinion page content. Scholarly work on professionalism in journalism can be found as early as the 1930s, when Rosten (1937) addressed the issue in his book on Washington correspondents.

This study bridges those research traditions by examining the relationship between group ownership and journalistic professionalism. But it approaches those topics somewhat differently from most previous research. First, the research relies on a new conceptualization of professionalism as an organizational-level concept (Beam, 1988a, 1988b, in press). Second, it is somewhat unusual (though not unique) in measuring and using in some of the data analysis several characteristics of group ownership; that is, it does not treat "group" as a unidimensional concept. In doing so, I hope to show that approaching group ownership as a multidimensional concept can be useful in future research.

The paper is divided into six sections. The first two sections examine, respectively, the literature on group ownership and the literature on professionalism (particularly as it relates to journalism). The third section details the measurement strategy for journalistic professionalism, the fourth section outlines the methods used in the collection and analysis of data for this particular study, the fifth section reports results of those analyses, and the sixth section -- the conclusion -- summarizes the findings of this research and identifies other directions in which research on group ownership might proceed.

A Review of Findings on Group Ownership

Studies of group ownership can be divided into two basic categories -- those that look at forces that lead to group ownership (i.e., Bagdikian, 1987, pp. 13-14; Compaine, 1979; Busterna, 1989, p. 2) and those that look at the consequences of group ownership. The second group of studies is the most relevant to this paper -- specifically the studies within that group that have quantitatively investigated the impact of group ownership. The consequences that have been examined can be divided, roughly, into the following subgroups:

--Manifest Content: This line of work looks at the content of news media organizations in terms of its nature, amount or quality. The organization usually is the unit of analysis in this research, and typically the purpose of the study is to compare content of group-owned and independent media organizations, most often daily newspapers. The variables studied have included editorial endorsements (Borstel, 1956; Daugherty, 1983; Hale, 1988; Pilegge, 1981; Rystrom, 1987; Thrift, 1977; Wackman et. al, 1975; Wagenburg & Solderlund, 1976); the nature of news and feature stories (Browning, Grierson & Howard, 1984; Donohue, Olien & Tichenor, 1985;[1] Keller, 1978; Lacy, 1986; Schweitzer, Weaver & Stone, 1977; Udall, 1978); and the quality of various kinds of content (Becker, Beam & Russial, 1978; Stone, Stone & Trotter, 1981). Overall, the findings of these studies are quite inconsistent. Indeed, a fair summative statement would be that the research shows that group ownership sometimes is and sometimes isn't associated with patterns of editorial endorsements, with differences in general news and feature content, and with higher or lower content quality.

--News or Editorial Practices. A somewhat similar assessment could be made of research on the policies or practices relating to the production of information, including the provision of resources for news or editorial work. In these studies, the organization usually is the unit of analysis, and, again, the typical research question at hand is, Do chain and independent papers differ on "Variable X." Variables that have been examined include such things as staff size, workload, and space devoted to news or editorials, (Busterna, 1988a; Drew & Wilhoit, 1976; Grotta, 1971; Lacy, 1986; Lacy, Fico & Simon, 1989; Litman & Bridges, 1986); policies (as opposed to content) related to editorial endorsements, (Bagdikian, 1987, pp. 9-10; Wackman et. al, 1975); number of news services available, (Litman & Bridges, 1986); polling practices (Demers, 1988); and mechanisms by which group ownership or management may influence news operations (Soloski, 1979). Here, study findings disagree on whether group-owned or independent papers have larger staffs, allot more space for news and editorial content, and tend to have similar editorial endorsements. With respect to news services, Litman & Bridges (1986) found a weak negative relationship with chain ownership. Demers (1988) found that moderate-sized group-owned daily papers were more likely to have done opinion polling than comparable independent papers, though there was no such difference for large and small dailies. And Soloski (1979) found that group ownership tends to be associated with various influences on news processing.

--Qualities of Journalists. These studies typically examine the attitudes or characteristics of journalists, differentiating among them by whether they work for independent or group-owned newspapers. For these analyses, the individual is the unit of analysis. Variables examined include career plans or aspirations (Parsons, Finnegan & Benham, 1988) and the motives, goals or attitudes of editors (Demers & Wackman, 1988; Olien, Tichenor & Donohue, 1988; St. Dizier, 1986). Here, contradictory results have been found on whether the motives, goals and attitudes of editors differ at group-owned and independent papers. As to career plans and aspirations, Parsons et. al found evidence that editors at group-owned papers tended to be socialized into organizational role expectations that transcend the local community.

--Business and Economic Practices. This line of work examines the impact of group ownership on such matters as pricing decisions, budgeting, acquisition, management or competitive practices of news media organizations, or actions potentially related to anti-trust law. Typically the unit of analysis is the organization or industry. Variables examined include advertising and subscription prices (Blankenburg, 1983; Busterna, 1988b; Dertouzos, 1978; Ferguson, 1983; Picard, 1987); budgeting or other management practices (Blankenburg, 1982; Blankenburg, 1985; Flatt, 1980; Rosse & Dertouzos, 1978; Soloski, 1979); technology adaption (Dertouzos, 1978); production efficiency (Dertouzos & Thorpe, 1982); and anti-trust consideration (Busterna, 1989; Coulson, 1986). Here, contradictory results have been reported on whether group-owned papers have higher advertising and subscription prices than independent papers, and whether group ownership facilitates more rapid adaption of new technology. There is not overwhelming evidence that group-owned papers are more efficiently run that independent papers. Both Busterna (1989) and Coulson (1986) have suggested that expansion of group ownership may create anti-trust issues, though Busterna's examination was an economic analysis and Coulson's an essay on implications for the diversity of information available to society. And, several studies suggest that corporate headquarters influences many budgeting or management decisions made by its subsidiary papers.

A major issue -- sometimes stated, sometimes not -- in much of this research on group ownership has been concern that a group's corporate headquarters might exert control over news and editorial practices of its media properties. Though some of the research reported above has examined actual news and editorial practices, a more typical approach to finding out about corporate influence on news and editorial processes has been to look at content differences between group-owned and independent media organizations. Though content differences clearly are important -- we are, of course, concerned about the nature of information available to society -- content studies are not a good way to find answers to questions about control over news processes. A better way is to look at the routine practices of the organization -- its policies, procedures and customs -- because it is within organizational practices that the power of an organization's many social actors (e.g., journalists, management, advertising staff, etc.) is institutionalized (Pfeffer, 1981, pp. 30-32). And power is a prerequisite for control.

Professions, Power and Control of Work

Power is central to a perspective on professions that has been in ascendancy since the 1960s, when the so-called attribute or trait models of professions came under critique. (The attribute or trait approach undergirds much of the research on professionalism in journalism.)[2] An emphasis on the exercise of power is at the heart of the power-relations approach to the study of professions, which has provided the theoretical basis for a new conceptualization of professionalism in journalism, a conceptualization that proposes professionalism can be fruitfully examined as an organizational construct (Beam, 1988a, 1988b, in press). Broadly speaking, the power-relations approach locates the concept of profession around the nature of the control an occupational group has over its work. Freidson argues that there are basically two principles for organizing work -- the administrative principle and the occupational principle (Freidson, 1973). Under the administrative principle, the legitimate authority for the control of work rests in the office of an administrator or manager. Under the occupational principle, the authority for the control of work rests collectively with the workers, who presumably have the expertise necessary for the planning and execution of their work tasks. In Freidson's view, professions are structured more according to the occupational principle. Control over the work of individual members is exerted collectively by members of the profession. Similarly, Johnson (1972, 1973) suggests that profession implies occupational self-control. He defines professionalism as a form of collective occupational social control. At organizations employing members of a profession, management presumably must give up much of its prerogative to control and coordinate the functioning of professional work. Freidson notes that a hierarchical administrative structure may exist, but it is supportive rather than authoritative; it is stripped of the right to exercise imperative coordination of work.

Control over professional work done in complex organizational settings is of concern both to professions and to the organizations that employ their members. Initially, the hierarchical bureaucracy of an organization was seen as conflicting with the supposed autonomy of the professional worker. But as professionals increasingly tended to nest permanently in formal organizations, the emphasis shifted to an examination of ways in which professionals and organizations co-exist (for example, Benson, 1973; Blau & Scott, 1962; Child & Fulk, 1982; Davies, 1983; Etzioni, 1961, pp. 51-67, 1964, p. 86-89; Freidson, 1975, pp. 8, 95-96, 1984; Hall, 1968; Kornhauser, 1963; Montagna, 1968; Satow, 1975). Often, the goals and values of the profession and the goals and values of an organization are assumed to conflict (Bantz, 1985) and therefore produce tension that must be accommodated through various mechanisms (Kornhauser, 1963; Lavine & Wackman, 1988, p. 16; Soloski, 1984). This view is one of interdependent institutions at odds, institutions that limit each other (Kornhauser, 1963, p. 9). But a conflict between an occupational group and an organization is not necessarily inevitable. For example, in "autonomous professional organizations" (Blau and Scott, 1962), professionals within the organization retain primary responsibility for defining organizational goals, for implementing those goals and for setting performance standards for members of the organization. Satow (1975) proposes a somewhat different relationship between organization and profession, though it would seem to produce a similar result. She suggests that some organizations are founded upon value-rational authority, which is authority grounded in the absolute value of a rationalized set of norms. According to Satow, an organization structured on value-rational authority embodies a commitment to certain goals regardless of the consequence those goals may hold for the organization. Satow suggests that many organizations in which professionals work, or segments of those organizations, can be described as value-rational in orientation in that they may embrace goals based on value-rational authority.

It is possible, then, to think of organizations as embracing to some degree the tenets of a profession. Building from this idea, Beam (1988a, 1988b, in press) has suggested it is possible to discuss the construct of professionalism not just as an occupational-level phenomenon but as an organizational-level phenomenon, too. First, one can think of occupational groups as varying in the general degree of control they have secured over the terms of their work -- they vary in their degree of professionalization. By control over terms of their work, I mean the authority of an occupational group to create and direct the substance, performance and goals of its work. Presumably no occupational group has absolute authority over the terms of its work (Ritzer & Walczak, 1986). So, it is more helpful to think of occupations as more or less professionalized rather than to think of some occupations as professions and others as not.

I assume that journalism is a less-professionalized occupation than many of the traditional professions, such as law and medicine. For a variety of reasons, journalists have been less successful than physicians or lawyers in securing authority to create and direct the substance, performance and goals of their work (Cullen, 1983). This is reflected in some characteristics of the occupational group, particularly those related to the control of members. Training programs in journalism have been established, but they need not be accredited or approved by the occupational group; occupational associations exist to promote common interests and articulate standards of performance, but they lack formal sanction power for wayward members; no legally protected monopoly over a product or service has been carved out for the occupational group; occupational custom suggests adopting a disinterested approach in preparing news and editorial content, but other social actors (advertisers, business leaders, etc.) routinely are able interfere with editorial decision-making.

Because journalism as an occupation generally is only "semi-professionalized," one could expect that news media organizations should differ relatively widely in their degree of organizational professionalism. By this I mean there should relatively wide variation across news media organizations in the degree to which the occupational group acts as an agent of social control for its members working in those organizations. For example, a group of clinics might vary in the degree to which members of the medical profession (collectively, the doctors) dictate the substance, performance and goals of its work at those clinics vis a vis other social actors with an interest in control of medical work. These other actors might be medical administrators, patients, insurers, and so forth. A group of news media organizations might vary in the degree to which members of the journalism "profession" dictate the substance, performance and goals of work at those news media organizations vis a vis other social actors with an interest in control of journalistic work. These other actors might be corporate management, readers, advertisers, sources, government regulators, production personnel, etc. However, given that I assume medicine is more professionalized than journalism, the amount of variation in control over work would would be greater for the news media organizations than for the clinics.

As indicated previously, a concern about centralized corporate control of subsidiaries permeates much of the writings on group ownership of the mass media. An implicit assumption is that such control would be inconsistent with the kind of control that journalists as an occupational group might choose to exercise over their work. Comparing the degree of organizational professionalism between group and independent papers should suggest whether journalists at group-owned papers typically retain less control over the terms of their work -- have lower levels of organizational professionalism -- than journalists at independent papers. Though not supported uniformly in the research findings, Soloski (1979) and Parsons et al. (1988) provide evidence that the autonomy of news processes is jeopardized by group ownership. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 predicts that

H1) Independent papers will rate higher on indicators of organizational professionalism than group-owned papers.

One of the most persistent shortcomings of the body of research on group ownership is that it assumes "all groups are created equal." Though there are exceptions (Olien, Tichenor & Donohue, 1988; Litman & Bridges, 1986), most analyses of the impact of group ownership treat that variable as a dichotomy (group vs. independent). Few attempt to distinguish in any way among groups, despite the fact that groups seem to vary substantially along many dimensions. Rosse & Dertouzos have observed that the degree of autonomy that corporate headquarters allow their subsidiary organizations varies widely (Rosse & Dertouzos, 1978). And, a recent report by the American Society of Newspaper Editors calls "group" and "independent" broad terms for various types of ownership. A relatively small group of researchers have examined dimensions of group ownership. For example, Litman & Bridges (1986) differentiated by chain size (number of papers) and cross-ownership with broadcast properties, and Olien, Tichenor & Donohue (1988) categorized ownership according to whether a paper was independent or not, and according to whether the headquarters location of the parent company was local, state or national. By in large, though, attempts at more complex conceptualizations and operationalizations of "group" have not been part of most research on group ownership.

There would be many possible dimensions of the concept "group." Three examined in this study are the size of the corporation, the nature of corporate ownership, and the degree to which corporate holdings are centralized. Hypothesis 2 predicts that these characteristics of group ownership will be significantly related to a newspaper's levels of organizational professionalism.

Indicators of Organizational Professionalism and Group Ownership

Beam (in press) has developed a strategy for empirically measuring organizational professionalism. This strategy assumes that the authority an occupational group retains over its work at a news media organization is reflected in an organization's structure, which is defined as the organization's policies, customs, procedures, practices and routine relationships. Therefore, one can assess organizational professionalism by examining the extent to which an organization's policies, procedures and customs conform with the expectations of behavior and standards of work performance articulated by an occupational group, in this case journalism.[3] An occupational group's expectations and standards may not necessarily be set out formally. Over time, though, they should find their way into professional ethics codes, into stands that professional organizations take on issues, into training standards for future members of the profession, and so forth. An examination of a variety of ethics codes suggests that, with respect to journalism, important expectations of behavior and work performance standards would include:

--An expectation that journalists be liberally educated and that they maintain a commitment to continuing education, either formal or informal.

--An expectation that journalists adopt a disinterested or impartial approach in dealing with the phenomena about which they write and edit.

--An expectation that journalists place a strong emphasis on producing factually accurate work.

--An expectation that journalists participate in occupational organizations, associations or activities dedicated to the advancement of the occupational group's collective interests.

--An expectation that journalists work to assure their access to sources of information, particularly information in the possession of government agencies.

--An expectation that journalistic work serve the public interest.

Essentially, the expectations of behavior and standards of work performance cited above are indicators of the occupational group's efforts to control, collectively, the various aspects of journalists' behavior and activities in work-related situations. These are the occupation's "professional practices." Consequently, the higher the degree of organizational professionalism at a given news media organization, the closer organizational policies, procedures and customs should match these expectations for "professional practice."

In a national mail survey conducted in 1987, Beam (1988a, in press) collected information on a wide variety of policies, procedures and customs of American daily newspapers. Survey questions based upon the list of occupational expectations described above probed what could be called the "professional practices" of the organization. Close-ended Likert-type response scales (frequently, sometimes, rarely, never, or a lot, some, a little, none) were provided for the bulk of these questions. In all, 208 editors responded from 58 of 60 daily newspapers selected using a stratified random sampling process.[4] Multiple editors were contacted at the papers 1) to assure a high response rate from the organizations contacted, and 2) to provide a "truer" reading of organizational characteristics by getting information from multiple sources. Eight-nine percent (51 of 58) of the organizations surveyed provided multiple responses. Of the 58 organizations, 38 (about 65 percent) were group-owned. This compares favorably with national estimates in 1987 of about 70 percent group ownership. Twenty-three groups were represented among the 38 papers.

Responses to the questions on professional practices were factor analyzed, yielding eight dimensions of professional practice (Table 1 and Appendix A/1 and A/2):

--Factor I, a professional development factor. This factor comprised six items assessing an organizational commitment to activities that directly or indirectly "make better informed and educated journalists." The six items ask about the frequency with which the organization pays expenses for journalism meetings or conventions; pays expenses for professional improvement seminars; gives paid time off for journalism meetings or conventions; gives paid time off for professional improvement seminars; gives paid time off for work-related education; and pays tuition for work-related education.

--Factor II, a resource commitment factor. This factor comprises six items that directly or indirectly pertain to the resources available to a newsroom to accomplish its editorial goals. These six items ask about the number of editors who see front page articles; the number of editors who see inside-page articles; the number of editorial pages daily; the number of major projects or series of any type produced; the frequency with which reporters must write for special advertising sections (negative loading); and the frequency with which the organization publishes "canned" editorials (negative loading). The latter two are seen as practices that either draw crucial resources away from traditional journalistic endeavors or reflect a lack of resource commitment.

--Factor III, an impartial practices factor. This factor comprises five items that reflect an organizational commitment to impartial or disinterested reporting and editing practices, which is probably the most frequently cited expectation of the occupational group. These items ask how frequently the paper gives important local individuals special treatment in the news columns; gives local businesses special treatment; gives publisher's friends or activities special treatment; gives advertisers special treatment; and downplays detrimental community news.

--Factor IV, an occupational prizes factor. This factor comprises two items that tap the degree of organizational emphasis on participation in and winning of journalistic contests, an important part of the occupational culture of journalism.

--Factor V, an editorial aggressiveness factor. This factor comprises four items that reflect a general level of aggressiveness in producing and evaluating an organization's news/editorial product. These items ask about the frequency of critiques on staff work; the frequency of investigative reporting; the frequency with which journalism publications are circulated; and the frequency with which series or reports on local issues are produced.

--Factor VI, a news process control factor. This factor comprises three items assessing organizational willingness to keep control of or access to information, which is the stock in trade of a media organization. The items ask about organizational willingness to go to court to protect source confidentiality; organizational willingness to go to court to gain access to a public meeting; and organizational efforts to check back with sources on story accuracy (negative loading). The source accuracy item, which loaded weakly, could reflect a reluctance by the organization to allow any outside intrusion or evaluation of its editorial processes.

--Factor VII, a professional involvement factor. This factor comprises two items assessing organizational commitment to helping staff maintain linkages with facets of the occupational culture. The items ask about organizational willingness to pay dues for professional organizations and organizational willingness to pay for subscriptions to professional publications.

--Factor VIII, an accuracy commitment factor. This factor comprises two items attempting to assess how seriously an organization takes its responsibility to correct factual errors.

The factor analysis was used to guide the construction of eight additive indices on the professional practices of each of the 58 organizations surveyed. Ultimately, the accuracy index was dropped because of reliability problems. In addition, the accuracy item was dropped from the news process control index because it seemed logically inconsistent with the others. Doing so also improved the reliability of that index.

The final seven indices were used as the dependent variables in the analyses in this paper. These indices had high reliability coefficients -- ranging from an Cronbach's alpha of .77 for the news process index to .89 for the impartial practices index. As a rule, these seven indices were found to be strongly correlated with each other, even after controlling for circulation of the organization. Twenty of 21 possible zero-order Pearson correlation coefficients were significant at the .05 level, and in the expected direction (Table 2). Eighteen of 21 remained significant at the .05 level after controlling for the paper's circulation, and one other reached the .10 significance level. (Circulation was controlled to mitigate any influence coming simply from the paper's size.) This pattern of correlations would be expected if all seven indices were, in fact, tapping dimensions of the same construct.

The seven indices also were summed to create an overall professional practices index. The reliability coefficient of this index also was quite high, at .70. This index also was used as a dependent variable in data analyses.

Size of group was measured using the aggregate circulation for all papers within a single corporation and the rank of that group (among all groups) ordered by aggregate circulation. Centralization of corporate holdings was measured using the number of papers held by a corporation. And nature of ownership was a dichotomous variable indicating whether the group's stock was publicly held or privately held. Because of the high correlation between a newspaper's circulation and many of the dependent variables in these analyses, circulation is used as a control variable.

Results

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the impact of group vs. independent ownership on the dependent variables. Total circulation of the newspaper was entered in Block 1, then a dummy-coded variable indicating group ownership (coded as "1") was entered in Block 2. A test was conducted of the significance of the incremental increase in R^2 that was accounted for by group ownership. The results of the analysis are reported in Table 3.

Group ownership does not appear to be related to a paper's score on six of the seven professional practices indices. Group and independent papers show no significant differences in terms of commitments to professional development of staff, resource commitment to editorial product, impartial reporting and editing practices, editorial aggressiveness and commitment to support professional involvements of staff. There also was no significant relationship to the score on the overall professional practices index. Consequently, there appears to be little support for H1, providing evidence that differences between group-owned and independent papers don't extend to their professional practices. The single exception to these null findings is that group papers place a stronger emphasis on taking part in and winning journalism prizes. Several possible explanations can be offered for this finding:

--Prizes are perceived to be associated with higher prestige (Beam, Dunwoody & Kosicki, 1986). As such, they perhaps become important tools that journalists at group-owned papers use to enhance their organization's prestige among other members of the corporate family. Such indicators of prestige might play a role in securing additional resources or investment within the group.

--Editors at group papers express a stronger intention of moving than editors at independent papers (Olien, Tichenor & Donohue, 1988). Prizes, as tools that can enhance prestige, may be important in facilitating editors' movements either within their group or to papers in other groups.

--The emphasis on product marketing may be stronger at group newspapers than independent newspapers. Prizes, as supposed indicators of journalistic quality, might be useful tools in marketing the news product to readers.

--Many groups sponsor their own journalistic contests for a variety of purposes. Participation may be required or expected, resulting in more attention to contests at group-owned papers. Similarly, contest participation may simply be part of the general corporate culture of groups.

The separate set of analyses done on the 38 group-owned papers showed some strong differences among "chains" on three of the individual professional practices measures and on the overall practices index (Table). A hierarchical multiple regression model was used in these analyses, in which the seven professional practices indices and the overall professional practices index were used as dependent variables. Again, the newspaper's circulation was entered in the first block of predictor variables. In the second block of predictor variables, aggregate group-wide circulation, the ranking of the group according to circulation, the number of papers in the group and a dummy variable indicating nature of ownership (public vs. private) were entered. Four of the models accounted for a significant amount of explained variance at the .05 level, and two other models were significant at the .10 level. For the professional development index, the resource commitment index and the editorial aggressiveness index, the block of "group-characteristic" variables accounted for a significant incremental increase in variance explained after controlling for the newspaper's circulation. The same was true for the overall professional practices index. In three of those cases, the regression coefficient for aggregate group-wide circulation was positively related to the professional practices indices and in each case the coefficient for number of papers in group was negatively related to the practices indices. These results seem to indicate, then, that being part of a group with high aggregate circulation tends to be associated with high ratings on some of the professional practices indices, as does belonging to a group with a smaller number of papers. However, in a formal sense, Hypothesis 2 is not supported because the other predictor variables -- ownership and circulation rank -- are not significant.

Conclusions

The results of this research do not indicate that, in terms of indicators of professional practices, group and independent papers differ significantly. However, there appear to be important differences within groups. Papers in larger groups (in terms of circulation) seem more committed to promoting the professional development of staffand to aggressiveness in producing and evaluating the editorial content of the paper. Apparently, much the same can be said of groups with smaller numbers of newspapers. In addition, the smaller groups appear to display a strong commitment to providing various kinds of editorial resources (i.e., space for opinion, staff time to produce major series). Subsequent studies should investigate this phenomenon further. One possible explanation for these findings is that the results, based on only 38 newspapers, may be unduly influenced by the high ratings on the organizational professionalism indicators from several groups with a handful of relatively large papers.

Perhaps the most useful result of this study is to underscore the need for a more sophisticated, multi-dimensional conceptualization of "group ownership." For some time, anecdotal evidence on the impact of groups has suggested they operate quite differently (Bagdikian, 1987, pp. 7-8). In a limited way, this study provides quantitative evidence to bolster that assertion. Other possible dimensions of group that could be examined include such things as the closeness with which the group's stock is held; the degree of budget control exercised by corporate headquarters on individual papers; the degree of cooperation among papers in the collection and distribution of editorial material; the extent of movement by reporters, editors and managers within the group; the geographical closeness of the papers in the group; and the extent of other media holdings and non-media holdings by the parent corporation. These factors, plus others not identified here, could be variable characteristics of group ownership that might be part of a constellation of forces that influences news and editorial practices of subsidiary newspapers. A more nuanced conceptualization of group is essential for this line of research to mature.

Footnotes

1 In this study, Olien, Tichenor & Donohue distinguish among several kinds of ownership, including corporate ownership by organizations based within state and out-of-state. Frequently, corporate ownership is group ownership.

2 The attribute or trait approach defines profession in terms of a set of ideal core attributes that characterize occupations typically considered professional (Beam, in press). Attempts to gain consensus on which attributes characterize a profession have failed, however, and this approach has been criticized for being theoretically flawed in a number of respects (Forsyth & Danisiewicz, 1985; Johnson, 1972; Roth, 1974; Windahl & Rosengren, 1978). Some of the studies on professionalism in journalism based on the attribute or trait approach include Bissland & Rentner, 1989; Coldwell, 1970; Garrison & Salwen, 1989; Hallahan, 1974; Idsvoog & Hoyt, 1977; Menanteau-Horta, 1967; McLeod & Rush, 1969a, 1969b; Nayman, 1970, 1973; Nayman, Atkin & O'Keefe, 1977; Nayman, McKee & Lattimore, 1977; Ward, 1966; Weinthal & O'Keefe, 1974; and Wright, 1976.

3 Journalism has no single occupational organization that can lay uncontested claim to representing journalists' interests. But several associations and organizations do represent powerful segments of the occupational group (e.g., editors, managing editors, news directors) or a substantial minority of the entire occupational group (e.g., the Society of Professional Journalists). The associations and organizations also have played a leading role in formally articulating, through codes of ethics the groups have promulgated and other actions they have taken, occupational expectations for behavior and standards of work performance for journalists.

4 Daily newspapers were grouped by circulation from highest to lowest and then divided into three categories: large (200,000 circulation and above), medium (50,000 to 199,999) and small (49,999 and below). Twenty newspapers were drawn randomly from each group using a systematic sampling procedure with a random starting point. Responses were received from all the large and medium newspapers and from 18 of the 20 small newspapers surveyed. The names of managing editors and department editors were drawn from the Editor & Publisher Yearbook and then confirmed through phone calls. Seven editors were

sent surveys at the large papers, five at the medium papers and three at the small papers. A total of 300 editors received surveys; 208 provided usable responses, for a response rate of 69 percent.

Table 1

Principal factors analysis of professional practices items with varimax rotation.

	Practices							
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
I. Professional Development								
1) Expenses for meeting	.80							
2) Expenses for seminar	.78							
3) Time for meetings	.74							
4) Time for seminars	.65							
5) Time for education	.39							
6) Tuition for educ	.31							
II. Resource Commitment								
7) Editors, front page		.85						
8) Editors, inside pg		.71						
9) Number edit pages		.65						
10) Projects, series		.50						
11) Special sections		-.44						
12) "Canned" editorials		-.32						
III. Impartial Practices								
13) Local individuals			.89					
14) Local businesses			.79					
15) Publisher's friends			.58					
16) Advertisers			.57			-.40		-.30
17) Community news			.52					
IV. Occupational Prizes								
18) Seeking prizes				.78				
19) Winning prizes				.82				
V. Editorial Aggressiveness								
20) Critique work					.67			
21) Investigative rept		.31			.51			
22) Circulate pub's					.45			
23) Local issues					.41			
VI. News Process Control								
24) Divulge sources						.51		
25) Challenge meeting						.49		
26) Check with sources						-.32		
VII. Professional Involvement								
27) Pay organ dues							.72	
28) Pay sub							.62	
VIII. Accuracy Commitment								
29) Pctg corrected								.35
30) Number of errors								.32
Variance accounted for=	22.8%	8.5%	7.7%	6.0%	5.4%	4.6%	4.0%	3.6%
Eigen value:	6.84	2.54	2.31	1.81	1.61	1.37	1.21	1.09

Total variance accounted for = 62.6%

Notes: Coefficients shown are factor loadings greater than .30. N=208.

Table 2

Zero-order Pearson correlation coefficients and first-order Pearson correlation coefficents (controlling for circulation) for each pair of professional practices indices.

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
I	1.00	.66[a] .51[a]	-.46[a] -.39[a]	.42[a] .32[a]	.59[a] .50[a]	.46[a] .38[a]	.47[a] .45[a]
II		1.00	-.48[a] -.42[a]	.36[a] .18[b]	.64[a] .56[a]	.42[a] .31[a]	.33[a] .31[a]
III			1.00	-.24[a] -.16	-.67[a] -.63[a]	-.55[a] -.50[a]	-.36[a] -.30[a]
IV				1.00	.46[a] .37[a]	.48[a] .42[a]	.06 .00
V					1.00	.57[a] .52[a]	.29[a] .24[a]
VI						1.00	.48[a] .45[a]
VII							1.00

Notes: First-order correlation coefficients appear below zero-order coefficients in table. I = professional development; II = resource commitment; III = impartial practices; IV = occupational prizes; V = editorial aggressiveness; VI = newsroom processes; VII = professional involvement.

[a] $p \leq .05$

[b] $p \leq .10$

Table 3

Regression of professional practices indices, overall professional practices index on circulation (Block 1) and group ownership (Block 2).

Variables	R^2 for Block 1	R^2 for Block 2	R^2 Change	Signf. Change	Signf. Beta
Professional Practices:					
Professional Development (I)	.21	.21	.00	NS	
Resource Commitment (II)	.60	.60	.00	NS	
Impartial Practices (III)	.08	.08	.00	NS	
Occupational Prizes (IV)	.11	.31	.20	.00	+
Editorial Aggressiveness (V)	.17	.17	.00	NS	
News Process Control (VI)	.09	.10	.01	NS	
Professional Involvement (VII)	.02	.05	.03	NS	
Overall Professional Practices Index	.39	.39	.00	NS	

Note: All confidence levels below .10 are being reported because of the small same size. N=58.

Table 4

Standardized regression coefficients, R^2 for regression of professional practices indices, overall professional practices index on circulation (Block 1), characteristics of group ownership (Block 2).

	Dependent Variables							
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	OA
Block 1								
Circulation	.193[a]	.603[a]	.133[b]	.054	.197[a]	.039	.181	.350[a]
R^2 for Block 1	.17[a]	.56[a]	.07[b]	.03	.14[a]	.06	.04	.35[a]
Block 2								
Group Circulation	.701[a]	.294	.575[b]	.280	.821[a]	.232	.478	.503[a]
Ownership	.057	.012	.064	-.064	.049	.366	-.007	.158
Group Rank	-.203	-.242[b]	.015	-.255	.008	-.048	.048	-.135
No. Papers Group	-.627[a]	-.366[a]	-.547[b]	-.365	-.697[a]	-.275	-.162	-.479[a]
R^2 for Change for Block 2	.34[a]	.12[a]	.18	.18	.32[a]	.21[b]	.12	.29[a]
Total R^2	.51[a]	.68[a]	.25[b]	.21	.46[a]	.26[b]	.16	.64[a]

Notes: I = Professional Development, II = Resource Commitment, III = Impartial Practices, IV = Occupational Prizes, V = Editorial Aggressiveness, VI = News Process Control, VII = Professional Involvement, OV = Overall Professional Practices Index. The direction of responses for the Impartial Practices Index is reversed from the other indices.

a $p < .05$

b $p < .10$

All confidence levels below .10 are being reported because of the small same size. N=38.

"INCHING FORWARD": THE METRIC CONVERSION CONTROVERSY IN THE PAGES OF THE *NEW YORK TIMES* AND THE *CHICAGO TRIBUNE* (1970-1980)

by

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SHORT ABSTRACT

An examination of the newspaper coverage of the metric conversion issue in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* in the years 1970-1980 shows that these newspapers editorially supported voluntary conversion to the metric system. News stories and feature articles gave the overall impression that conversion was imminent, and several feature articles attempted to ease the conversion process for readers by offering conversion charts. Opposition to metric conversion was expressed by columnists, and by readers writing letters.

LONG ABSTRACT

THIS paper examines the newspaper coverage of the debate pertaining to the proposal to officially convert the United States of America to the metric system of weights and measures. Coverage of the issue in the *New York Times* was studied for the years 1970-1980 -- the five years preceding and succeeding the passing of the Metric Conversion Act of 1975. In addition, coverage of the issue in the *Chicago Tribune* was also studied for the years 1972-1980.

Both the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* editorially supported voluntary conversion to the metric system. News stories and feature articles in these newspapers also gave the overall impression that conversion was inevitable, and several feature articles attempted to ease the conversion process for readers by offering conversion charts. Opposition to metric conversion was expressed by columnists, and by readers writing letters. The number of letters favoring adoption of the metric system exceeded the number opposing conversion.

We may conclude that the government's attempts to implement metric conversion in the 1970s were supported, and not hindered by the efforts of the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune*.

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THIS paper examines the newspaper coverage of the debate pertaining to the proposal to officially convert the United States of America to the metric system of weights and measures. Press coverage of the issue in the *New York Times* was studied for the period 1970-1980 -- the five years preceding the passing of the Metric Conversion Act of 1975, and the five succeeding years. In addition, coverage of the issue in the *Chicago Tribune* in the years 1972-1980 was also studied. The first section provides a brief introduction to the metric system, and the importance of weights and measures in the life of a nation. The second section presents the international relevance of the issue, in the context of which developments in the United States must be evaluated. A more detailed statement of research questions and methodology is then presented, followed by the research findings and conclusions.

The Metric System

On any given work day, Americans are estimated to make 25 billion measurements:[1] glancing at the thermometer to decide whether to wear a jacket or not, comparing weights and prices in the supermarket, selecting the right wrench to replace the spark-plug in the car, calibrating a machine tool. Even in 1990, the standards used in the vast majority of these measurements in the United States of America are based on the f.p.s. (foot-pound-second) system, also known as the Imperial, British or avoirdupois system. The units of the f.p.s. system were originally based on capricious standards; for example in 1324, during the reign of King Edward II in England, it was declared that "three barleycorns, round and dry shall make an inch, and twelve inches a foot."[2] Although the base units of the f.p.s. system have now been redefined in more precise terms, the units of length, weight, heat and volume bear no logical relationship to each other.[3] This is in contrast to the International System of Units (abbreviated as SI, for Système International d'Unites), commonly known as the metric system, where the units of length, weight (mass), volume, heat, etc. are all logically related to each other (for example, one kilogram is equal to the weight of the volume of water stored in a vessel measuring one cubic meter i.e. the weight of one liter of water).[4] Apart from being logical, the metric system is computationally easier than the f.p.s. system, as all measurement units are related in powers of ten (e.g. a kilogram is 1000 grams, a centimeter is 1/100 of a meter). Owing to these factors, the metric system rapidly became the measurement standard for scientific applications worldwide. In Europe, where the system originated, metric measures also gradually became the standard for industrial and domestic applications.

International Developments

By the mid 1960s, the English-speaking countries of the world -- the United Kingdom (Great Britain), Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the USA, the Republic of South Africa, and a few former British colonies -- were the only industrialized nations that had not adopted the metric system as their measurement standard.[5] The United Kingdom, spurred by its anxiety to join the European Common Market, realized it had to change its measurement standards if it was to have any chance of competing in the continent. Measures were initiated in 1965 to convert the UK to the metric within a decade, and also to decimalize its currency in 1969. Around the same time, Australia, New Zealand, the Republic of South Africa, India, Kenya, Uganda and Swaziland initiated the process of officially converting all their measurements to the metric system.[6] Canada followed suit a few years later, leaving the United States alone among the major industrialized nations of the world not to have an official policy of converting to the metric system.[7]

Developments in the United States

The first attempt to get Congress to adopt metrication in the United States was in 1821, and the debate has been going on ever since.[8] Writers have described the controversy as being characterized by high levels of emotionalism and by "more intense and virulent prose than an attack on the sanctity of motherhood."[9]

In 1968, "perhaps out of weariness over the annual fight,"[10] Congress passed the Metric Study Act, which merely authorized the U.S. National Bureau of Standards to conduct an in-depth three-year study to determine the impact of increasing worldwide use of the metric system on the United States.[11] In July, 1971 the Secretary of Commerce sent his report on the study to the Congress and included in his recommendations "that the United States change to the International Metric System deliberately and carefully through a ten-year coordinated national program."[12] Four more years were to elapse before President Gerald Ford signed into law the Metric Conversion Act on December 23, 1975.[13] The Act (also known as PL94-168), which has been described by proponents of metrication as "toothless,"[14] did not establish any timetable for conversion and made adoption of the metric system voluntary rather than mandatory.

Considerable legislative effort was involved even in order to get a bill for voluntary conversion passed into law. In 1975 alone, ten pieces of legislation were proposed before the consensus bill emerged that was finally signed into law.[15] This prolonged legislative wrangling perhaps reflected the lawmakers' recognition of the delicacy (and potential volatility) of an issue affecting the everyday lives of practically every citizen and every industry in the country.

Research Questions and Objectives

In spite of the passage of the Metric Conversion Act in 1975, there is little evidence in the United States -- at the time of writing (1990) -- of a widespread switch to the metric system for everyday weights and measures. In view of the critical role played by the mass-media in agenda-setting,[16] it is worth examining newspaper coverage of the metrication issue in an attempt to answer the following questions: Was there any newspaper coverage of the metrication issue before the passage of the Metric Conversion Act? What was the extent of editorial coverage of the issue before and after passage of the act? What were the stances (if any) of the editors? Following the passage of the Metric Conversion Act, did the newspapers attempt to help prepare their readers for the forthcoming change, and if so, how? What were the reactions of newspaper readers to the metrication proposal (as reflected in letters to the editor)? What insights can we get regarding readers' reasons for supporting as well as opposing change?

While it is desirable to analyze the above issues with regard to all the mass-media, newspapers provide an appropriate starting point for two reasons. First, newspaper coverage of an issue is a reflection of its topicality and news value. Second, a newspaper's letters column provides a forum for debate yet unmatched by any other mass medium.

Scope of the Study

As a first attempt toward answering the above questions, this paper analyzes coverage of issues pertaining to metric conversion in two newspapers: the *New York Times,* and the *Chicago Tribune.* The time period selected for analysis was the decade 1970-1980. Unfortunately, indexed references to the *Chicago Tribune* were available only from 1972 onwards, hence only coverage in the *New York Times* was analyzed for 1970 and 1971.

The choice of these two newspapers for the study was influenced by the fact that they are the leading newspapers in the two largest cities in the United States outside the West Coast, and are considered to be extremely influential not only in the cities of their publication but well beyond.[17] It must be recognized that the use of two large-circulation metropolitan dailies limits the representativeness of the study: it cannot claim to represent coverage of the metric conversion issue by newspapers all across the United States. The choice of the period of coverage was dictated by the fact that the Metric Conversion Act was finally passed in 1975, hence it is appropriate to study the coverage in the five years preceding the passage of the legislation, and the five following years, to see if there were significant changes in the quantum and slant of newspaper coverage of metrication.

Methodology

The *New York Times Index* [18] and the *Chicago Tribune Index* [19] were used as the basic references. All references to news-reports, articles and letters pertaining to the metric system, including references listed under other subject heads, were examined and analyzed.[20] The quantity of coverage given to metrication-related subjects each year was tabulated -- in terms of the number of news-items, feature stories, editorials and letters -- to give an idea of the trend in coverage . The number of letters for and against conversion to metrication were also counted and tabulated. Finally, a content-analysis of the various news reports and feature stories was attempted.

FINDINGS

Trends in Coverage

In the period 1970-1980, there were 131 newsitems and letters in the New York Times which contained references to the metric system. Leaving out the years 1970 and 1971 for purposes of comparison with the Chicago Tribune, there were 121 references to the metric system in the *New York Times* in the years 1972-1980, compared to 99 references in the *Chicago Tribune* .

The trend in the coverage of the metrication issue is shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3. The total coverage in the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* from 1972 to 1980 is presented in Figure 1. The *New York Times* carried 4 items relating to metrication in 1970, and 6 items in 1971 (also see Figure 2). Coverage increased slightly in 1972, to 9 items; the *Chicago Tribune* carried 6 items in the same year. There was a steady increase in the number of items devoted to the issue in the *New York Times* from 1973 until 1976, followed by a sudden spurt of coverage in 1977 (see Figure 1). This pattern is paralleled by the *Chicago Tribune,* except that there was a slight drop in 1976 compared to the previous year. Coverage dropped sharply in 1978 in both the newspapers. It continued to drop for the next two years in the *Chicago Tribune,* whereas in the *New York Times,* the number of items 1979 and 1980 remained fairly constant, although the total quantum of coverage was much lower than in any year after 1973.

Differences in Coverage

Newspaper coverage of the metrication issue broadly took the following forms:

1. Brief news reports covering international and domestic aspects of metric conversion, such as legislative and industrial action
2. Longer news stories covering international and domestic aspects of metric conversion, such as specific proposals, and public reaction to such proposals
3. Feature articles, including reviews of progress toward metrication
4. Editorials
5. Signed columns (including syndicated columns) expressing specific writers' views on metrication
6. Letters to the editor

There were three major differences in the composition of coverage given to the issue by the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* (see Figures 2 and 3). First, the *Chicago Tribune* carried a relatively greater number of detailed news-stories on the subject of metrication, compared to the *New York Times,* which carried more brief news-reports that merely reported a metrication-related event without much elaboration. Second, the *Chicago Tribune* also carried articles relating to metrication by several columnists (syndicated and non-syndicated), a feature that was totally absent from the *New York Times*. Third, the *Chicago Tribune* carried eight editorials on metric conversion from 1972 to 1980, compared to four in the *New York Times*.

Topics Covered

The newspaper coverage of issues relating to metrication can be classified into the following categories:

1. *Foreign developments:* Stories where the headline signalled coverage of metric conversion in other countries, with no reference, or only passing reference to the U.S. in the text.
2. *Consumer-oriented articles and features:* Articles and features clearly intended to increase consumer awareness about the metric system, and/or to facilitate conversion.
3. *Packaging/ measure-related aspects:* Proposals by specific industries (notably liquor, soft-drinks and gasoline) to change to the metric system, which would affect consumers through packaging/ measure changes.
4. *Legislative developments:* Coverage of action by Congress to implement or encourage metric conversion.
5. *Industrial aspects:* Conversion by various industries to the metric system, including labor retraining and cost aspects.
6. *Education-related news stories:* Stories relating to teaching metric conversion in schools/ volunteer efforts to educate people about metrication.
7. *Weather Reports:* Specific news-items pertaining only to proposals by the National Weather Service to report all temperatures in degrees Celsius.

8. *Comprehensive news stories:* News stories (based on news events) dealing with multiple facets of metric conversion, including historical, legislative, industrial and consumer implications.

9. *Columns:* Items by columnists favoring or opposing metric conversion.

10. *Highway signs:* Specific news-items pertaining only to proposals to convert highway signs to metric.

11. *Miscellaneous:* News stories pertaining to other issues, such as philatelic and numismatic aspects, implications for athletic fields and sports fans, etc.

The relative weight given to various kinds of coverage by the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* is presented in Table 1, and in Figures 4 and 5. The categories in the table do not include editorials, and letters to the editor expressing readers' views. To render the comparison more meaningful, pieces by columnists were not included, as these appeared only in the *Chicago Tribune* (a total of 10 columns appeared from 1977 to 1980; there were no columns before then).

From the table and the charts, we can once again see that a major difference between the two papers is in the percentage of space allotted to consumer-oriented feature articles. The *Chicago Tribune* had a far higher proportion of these, especially notable being a long 4-part series on "Thinking Metric," which appeared in the *Chicago Tribune* on 4 successive days in January 1977. There were several smaller articles in the same month, which were companion pieces for the series.

Table 1. Weightage given to various kinds of coverage (also refer Figures 4 and 5)

Category	New York Times(%)	Chicago Tribune (%)
Foreign developments	15.6	4.0
Consumer-Oriented Features	15.6	42.0
Packaging Aspects	13.5	6.0
Legislative Developments	13.5	6.0
Industrial Aspects	11.5	10.0
Educational Aspects	11.5	12.0
Weather Reports	4.2	4.0
Comprehensive News Stories	4.2	8.0
Highway Signs	3.1	4.0
Miscellaneous	7.3	4.0
Total	100.0	100.0

Attitudes of the newspapers toward Metric Conversion

The news reports in both the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* throughout the period gave an overriding impression to the reader that U.S. conversion to the metric system was inevitable. Even those news stories and articles that mentioned the costs of metrication usually concluded that this expense was justified in view of the long term benefits of conversion. Interestingly, though, when the Metric Conversion Act was finally signed into law by President Ford two days before Christmas in 1975, the *New York Times* did not signal the event with a headline. The signing of the bill was reported as part of a story on page 22, titled "Ford Signs Tax Cut Bill; Starts Colorado Vacation."[21] The *Chicago Tribune* gave the event considerably more coverage, devoting an entire story to it, titled "Ford signs legislation promoting expanded use of the metric system."[22] Both the newspapers carried a quote from Gerald Ford, who said in a statement while signing the bill: "to say that this legislation is historic is an understatement." Mr. Ford was also quoted as saying that "our continued use of the English system of measurement was making us an island in a metric sea."

The feature articles in the *New York Times* also gave the same impression -- of the inevitability of metric conversion -- except for one article in 1978, titled "Don't Count on Metrics."[23] This article was based on a report to Congress by the General Accounting Office, which expressed doubts about the wisdom of total metric conversion and called for further considerations of the issue, mainly with respect to the cost angle.

Editorial opinions expressed in the *New York Times* were all in favor of metric conversion, although the editorials repeatedly emphasized that the voluntary nature of conversion should be retained. After the Senate approved resolution S.100 in 1975, which was to serve as the draft for the Metric Conversion Act passed on December 23, the Times ran an editorial on December 9, titled "Inching Forward," the second paragraph of which read "No deadlines have been set for the conversion. Nor should they be since many changes involve far-reaching and often delicate adjustments in production procedures, machinery and legal requirements, not to mention human custom."[24] To judge from readers' letters, it was "human custom" that seemed to generate the most reactions.

The *Chicago Tribune* was equally cautious in its endorsement of metric conversion in the beginning, but the newspaper's editorial tone rapidly became more strident, in favor of conversion. A *Chicago Tribune* editorial in 1975 welcomed the moves of educational institutions in California and Illinois to convert fully to metric by 1976, but also remarked that "Congress (fortunately in most respects) does not have the same powers that many other governments do to force a changeover. It can make the metric system legal (which it has done). Our government can issue its specifications and conduct its business in metric measures (which it is doing by stages). But it can't order us to stop using feet and gallons and pounds."[25] This is in contrast to the newspaper's stance two years later (see below).

In January 1977, the *Chicago Tribune* editorially endorsed the metric system, and ran a series of special features for five consecutive days.[26] The series was based on long (in two cases, full page) articles by *Chicago Tribune* feature writer Jim Gallagher. The entire series appeared under the masthead, "Thinking Metric." The first article also featured a pull-out chart in the magazine section of the *Chicago Tribune* to help the reader through the conversion. Each of the articles in the series contained an invitation to the reader to write for a *Chicago Tribune* metric conversion scale ("which quickly provides equivalents in length, area, volume, weight and temperature"), offered by the newspaper for the nominal charge of 50 cents.[27] The series was capped by an editorial on January 20, 1977, also featuring the "Thinking Metric" masthead, concluded: "Time is running out for us to join the rest of the world in a sensible, easy, standard method of measurement, one already required in scientific professions everywhere, one our children will know even if we don't. If we haven't made substantial progress toward using the metric system in another two or three years, Congress may have to consider some more effective legal shoves."[28]

Ironically, in the same year (1977) the Federal government the implemented and then abandoned two major moves, which would have advanced the U.S. quite far down the path of the widespread use of metric measures. The first of the moves was a proposal by the Federal Highway

Administration in April that "speed signs along the nation's roads and highways [would] be converted to the metric system next year."[29] The plan called for converting milepost and guide signs, such as those designating distance to cities. Changeover costs were estimated to be around $100 million. However, by June 25, the *Chicago Tribune* carried a story with the self-explanatory headline: "Metric road signs miss by mile. Public cries, 'Stop'; U.S. yields."[30] The *New York Times* carried the same story, headlined differently.[31] The Director of the Federal Highway Administration, William M. Cox, was quoted as saying that the conversion was abandoned because "there was simply too much opposition to the proposal from the general public... More than 5,000 comments were received, and about 98 percent of them were negative."

The second move by the Federal Government was a proposal to convert all weather reporting by the National Weather Service to metric measures by 1979, including the *exclusive* use of the Celsius scale to report temperatures. The *Chicago Tribune* , in an editorial, reported that "a public hearing [by the National Weather Service] had shown almost no opposition."[32] The editorial analyzed the argument that replacing highway signs would cost a lot of money, but shifting to the Celsius scale to measure temperature would not, and went on to comment: "Frankly, we doubt that reason had a great deal to do with either decision... The real reason, we suspect, is that nobody is really pushing for the metric system and that decisions are being made on a casual, haphazard basis. If we're going to achieve the shift in the foreseeable future, it will take a good deal more dedication than has been evident." That editorial was written three months before the National Weather Service announced that it had decided to delay the metric conversion proposal, as it had received "many letters critical of the proposal, along with many others supporting it."[33]

The failure of the proposals to convert highway signs and weather reports to SI units was followed in 1978 by the General Accounting Office report, which expressed doubts about the wisdom of total metric conversion and called for further consideration of the issue, mainly with respect to the cost angle. The *New York Times* did not react editorially to the report, beyond carrying a feature article based on the report.[34] The *Chicago Tribune* reacted with a lead editorial titled "Don't give up on metrics."[35] The editorial stated: "The question being raised, in effect, is 'Why convert?' This is the wrong question. The right question is, 'Why not convert -- quickly in matters where it is of immediate importance, and at our own comfortable speed in other matters?'" The editorial concluded in ringing rhetorical tones: "Adherence to feet and inches, after all, is like racial prejudice. It is in our schools where the change can be best facilitated... After all, trade and travel are bound to bring the United States and the rest of the world closer together. Why perpetuate habits and prejudices which will only make life difficult for future generations?"

The *New York Times* carried no editorials on the metric system from 1978 through 1980. The *Chicago Tribune* carried no editorials on the subject in 1979. In 1980, there was an editorial, focusing on the pronunciation of the word 'kilometer,' but it contains no references to metric conversion.[36]

As has been noted earlier, the total number of references to the metric system in the *Chicago Tribune* declined after the large number of feature articles in 1977. In the *New York Times* , there was a slight increase in the number of news reports in 1980 compared to the previous year, mainly in connection with the conversion of several Shell petrol pumps in New York to liter measures.[37] The Times also carried 2 reports on Shell pumps in Houston, which had begun to dispense gasoline in liters.[38] Paul Benge, the owner of the first pump in Houston to be calibrated in liters, was quoted as saying that business had declined in the first two weeks after conversion, but that customers had started returning thereafter.

Dissenting Columnists

While the *Chicago Tribune* editorially endorsed metric conversion, it also contained several articles by regular columnists, most of which opposed metrication. The most interesting of these was perhaps a series of syndicated columns by Bob Greene, who argued against the metric system on behalf of "WAM! -- We Ain't Metric!... the organization founded by this column to combat the alien and sinister forces that are cramming the demented metric system down the throats of the American public. WAM!'s guidelines are eloquent and simple: We are against the metric system because we don't like it. We won't learn it because we don't want to."[39] Other columnists who opposed the metric system in the *Tribune* were editorial writer Justin M. Fishbein,[40] and columnists Patrick Buchanan,[41] and Andrew Greeley, who opined, "There's no particular reason why the rest of the world could not convert to inches. They drink Coca Cola, don't they?"[42]

As mentioned earlier, the *New York Times* did not carry any similar columns, although an article by Dartmouth English professor Noel Perrin on March 11, 1977 recalled the rich idiomatic contribution that traditional measures had made to the English language, and lamented that "the metric system will ignore and eventually abolish quite a lot of our past."[43]

Readers' Reactions

The number of published letters favoring the metric system exceeded the number of letters opposed to the system (refer Figures 1 and 2). It is not clear whether this reflects the total volume of letters, or an expression of editorial preference for favorable reader opinions.

As in the case of Prof. Perrin's column in the *New York Times,* several letters lamented the passing away of a system that has made a rich contribution to the English vocabulary. For instance, a letter from a reader pointed out that the ten-gallon hat will now have to be referred to as a 40-liter hat.[44] Other letters were neutral, such as the reply of another reader, who pointed out that the ten-gallon hat had nothing to do with the liquid measure, but was instead derived from *galon,* the Spanish word for ribbon.[45]

Readers opposing the metric system often offered the argument that it was "inconvenient," or "foreign." Some letters even argued that "the old system is inherently superior"[46] without necessarily offering a justification for the claim. In 1971, letters from two industrialists opposed conversion on the grounds that it would favor big business at the expense of small businesses.[47]

Supporters of the metric system generally argued for its convenience, ease of calculation, and universal acceptance. Yet others even proposed suggestions for painless conversion, such as a letter from a Rutgers University professor, stating that "few will regret the passing of the gill, the bushel and fluid ounce, but the pint and the pound have more than a sentimental ring." The writer noted that in European markets, bread, cheese and other products are sold by the half-kilo, which is colloquially referred to as the pound (e.g. *pfund* in German). The author glibly recommended that Congress should "declare as of the first of January 1973 that a pound shall weigh 500 grams, a quart one liter (a gallon five liters?), and a yard become one meter. These units could even be called 'metric gallons' etc."[48]

Most letters favoring metric conversion were backed with logical arguments; most letters opposing conversion were based on a reluctance to change, or a distrust of new systems. A few letters based their opposition on the high cost of conversion. In general, the argument quality of letters favoring metrication appeared to be superior to those opposing it.

Conclusions

An examination of the newspaper coverage of the metric conversion issue in the 1970s shows that the two newspapers under study editorially supported voluntary conversion to the metric system. News stories and feature articles also gave the overall impression that conversion was inevitable, and several feature articles attempted to ease the conversion process for readers by offering conversion charts. Opposition to metric conversion was expressed by columnists, and by readers writing letters. The number of letters favoring adoption of the metric system, however, exceeded the number opposing conversion.

We may conclude therefore, that the Government's attempts to implement metric conversion were supported, and not hindered, by the efforts of the *New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* . While an analysis of volume of coverage in terms of column-centimeters was not attempted, a visual inspection of the newsitems studied suggests that such an analysis would yield results similar to the ones reported in this paper.

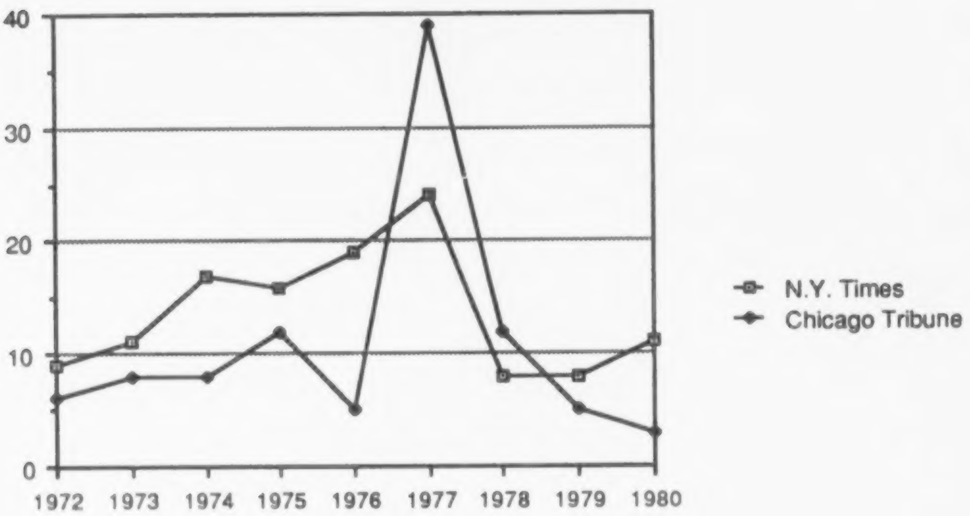
A much wider sample of newspapers needs to be examined before we can generalize these findings to draw conclusions about the attitude of the press nationwide, or even within a particular state.

Directions for future research

Two directions for further research emerge. First, there is the obvious extension of this study to a state-wide, and perhaps nationwide sample of newspapers, preferably incorporating a measure of the volume (column centimeters) of coverage given to various subjects and viewpoints, in addition to an item count. Secondly, it would be interesting to contrast the reporting of the issue in the newspapers of the 1970s with those of the 1820s, when metric legislation was first proposed in Congress.

Figure 1

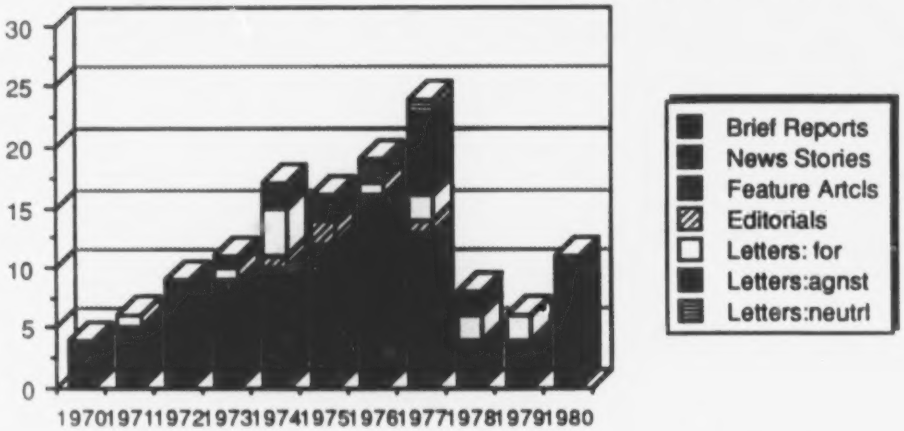
Total Number of Items in New York Times v. Chicago Tribune



	New York Times	Chicago Tribune
1972	9	6
1973	11	8
1974	17	8
1975	16	12
1976	19	5
1977	24	39
1978	8	12
1979	8	5
1980	11	3

Figure 2

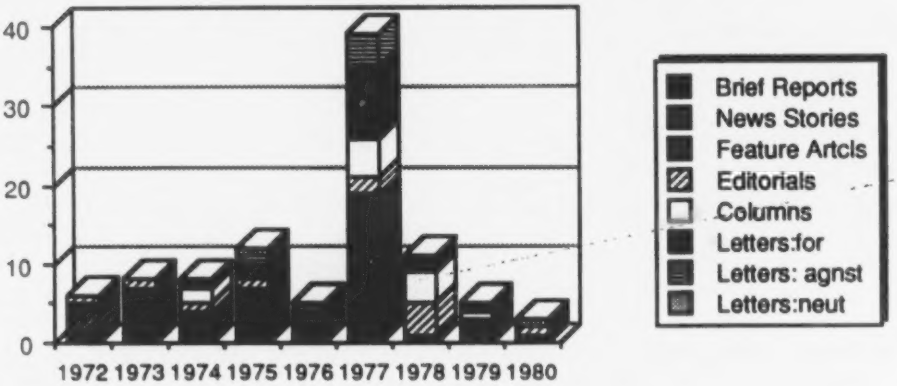
Coverage in The New York Times: number of items



Year	Brief Repts	News Stor.	Feat. Arts.	Editorials	Letters			Total
					For	Agnst	Neut	
1970	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
1971	1	3	1	0	1	0	0	6
1972	3	2	2	0	0	2	0	9
1973	6	1	2	0	1	1	0	11
1974	4	5	1	1	4	2	0	17
1975	5	4	3	2	0	1	1	16
1976	8	6	2	0	1	0	2	19
1977	5	4	4	1	2	7	1	24
1978	1	1	2	0	2	2	0	8
1979	1	3	0	0	2	0	0	6
1980	2	4	4	0	0	1	0	11

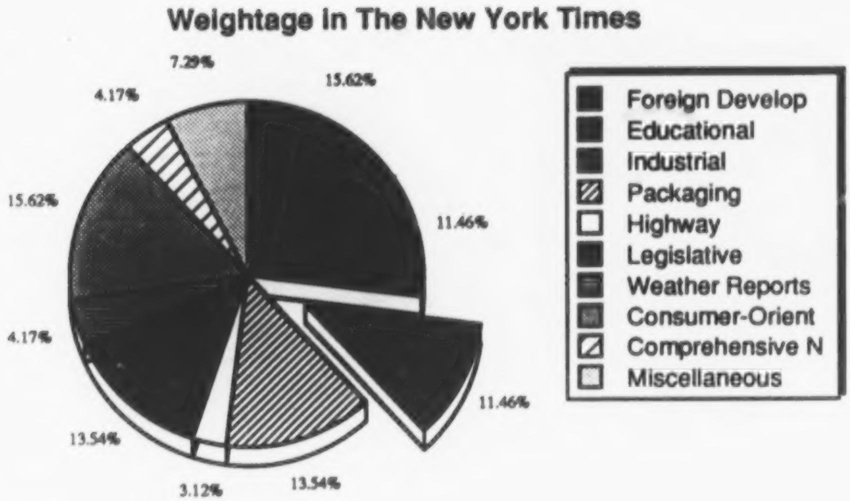
Figure 3

Coverage in the Chicago Tribune: No. of Items



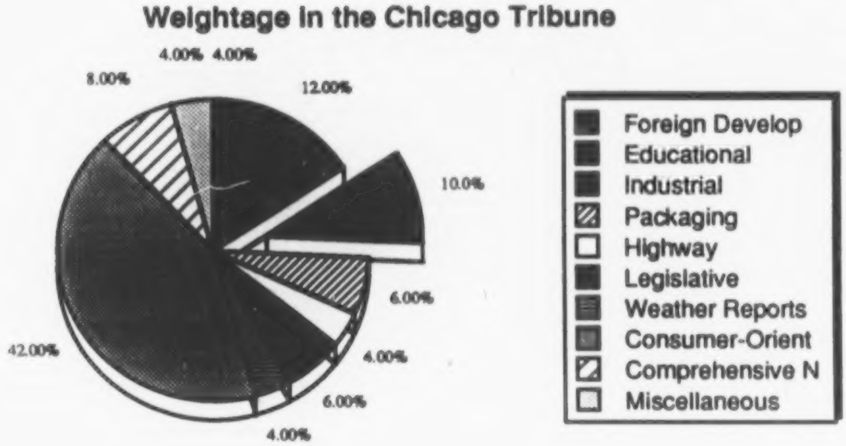
Year	Brief Repts	News Stor.	Feat. Arts.	Editorials	Columns	Letters			Total
						For	Agnst	Neut	
1972	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	6
1973	1	4	2	1	0	0	0	0	8
1974	1	1	2	1	2	1	0	0	8
1975	0	6	1	1	0	2	1	1	12
1976	0	2	2	0	0	0	1	0	5
1977	0	5	14	2	5	9	4	0	39
1978	0	0	1	4	4	2	0	0	11
1979	0	0	3	0	1	1	0	0	5
1980	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	3

Figure 4



Category	No. of items
Foreign News Reports	15
Education-Related	11
Industry-Related	11
Packaging-Related	13
Highway Conversion	3
Legislative Action	13
Weather Reports	4
Consumer-Oriented Features	15
Comprehensive Articles	4
Miscellaneous	7

Figure 5



Category	No. of Items
Foreign News Reports	2
Education-Related	6
Industry-Related	5
Packaging-Related	3
Highway Conversion	3
Legislative Action	3
Weather Reports	2
Consumer-Oriented Features	21
Comprehensive Articles	4
Miscellaneous	2

ENDNOTES

Note: The convention followed in referring newspaper articles is the same as is found in the indexes to the publications. The first number refers to the section; the second number refers to the page number, and the third number refers to the column in which the article begins.

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[1] "A Better Way to Measure Gina's Bust." *New York Times,* August 27, 1972, 4:2:1.

[2] *Report of the Committee on Coinage, Weights and Measures* (46th Congress, 1st Session. House of Representatives, Report No. 14). Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1879.

[3] A rare exception being the pint, which is equivalent to the volume of a pound of water, leading to the proverb, "A pint's a pound the world around." The pint, however, bears no logical relationship to the gallon, a more widely used unit of volume in the fps system.

[4] The following account of the metric system is found in David Halliday and Robert Resnick's excellent textbook, "Fundamentals of Physics" (Third Edition) (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1988): "In 1792, the newborn French Republic established a metric system of weights and measures. As its cornerstone, the meter was defined to be one ten-millionth of the distance from the north pole to the equator. Eventually, for practical reasons, this earth standard was abandoned, and the meter came to be defined as the distance between two fine lines engraved near the ends of a platinum-iridium bar... This *standard meter bar* was kept at the International Bureau of Weights and Measures near Paris, and accurate copies were sent to other standardizing laboratories throughout the world. These secondary standards were used to calibrate other, still more acceptable standards so that ultimately every standard measuring device derived its authority from the standard meter bar through a complicated chain of comparisons... In 1959, this also became true of the yard, whose legal definition in this country [the U.S.A.] was adopted that year to be 1 yard = 0.9144 meters (exactly)... In 1960 an atomic standard for the meter, based on the wavelength of light was adopted. Specifically, the meter was redefined to be 1,650,763.73 wavelengths of a particular red-orange light emitted by atoms of krypton-86 in a gas discharge tube."

[5] "Britons Wrangle While They Inch To Metric System", *New York Times,* March 28, 1976, 1:21:5.

[6] *Going Metric: An Analysis of Experiences in Five Nations and their Implications for U.S. Educational Planning.* Palo Alto, CA: America Institute for Research in the Behavioral Sciences, 1974.

[7] See, for instance, "Is Metrics U.S.A. Just a Silly Little Millimeter Away?" *New York Times* , July 21, 1978 , B1:1:1, reporting that the sole non-metric countries (other than the U.S.) were "Borneo [sic], Brunei, Liberia and South Yemen."According to a National Public Radio broadcast (*Morning Edition,* January 11, 1990), the only countries not yet on the metric system are the U.S.A., Burma and Liberia.

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[8] United States Department of Commerce. *A history of the metric system controversy in the United States.* National Bureau of Standards Special Publication 345-10. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, August 1971.

[9] Donovan, F. *Prepare now for a Metric Future.* New York: Weybright & Talley, 1980, quoted in *Going Metric: An Analysis of Experiences in Five Nations and their Implications for U.S. Educational Planning* (refer footnote 6).

[10] "A Better Way to Measure Gina's Bust." *New York Times,* August 27, 1972, 4:2:1.

[11] Bartlett, David F. (editor). *The Metric Debate.* Boulder, CO: Colorado Associated University Press, 1980. p. 5. (Also see reference under footnote 1).

[12] U.S. Department of Commerce. *A Metric America, A Decision Whose Time Has Come.* National Bureau of Standards Special Publication 345, 1971.

[13] "Ford signs legislation promoting expanded use of the metric system." *Chicago Tribune,* December 24, 1975, 2:7:4.

[14] *Metric Yearbook 1975.* Neenah, Wisconsin: J.J. Keller and Associates, Inc.

[15] According to the *Metric Yearbook 1975* (op. cit.), the following bills relating to metric conversion were introduced in the House of Representatives in the 94th Congress, first session (1975):

1) H.R. 254 (January 14, 1975): To declare a national policy of converting to the metric system in the US, and to establish a National Metric Conversion Board to co-ordinate the voluntary conversion to the metric system over a period of ten years (Mr. Teague and others).
2) H.R. 492 9(January 14, 1975): To provide a national program in order to make the international metric system the predominant but not exclusive system of measurement in the United States, and to provide for converting to the general use of the system within ten years (Mr. Hechler).
3) H.R. 627 (January 14, 1975): To establish a program for the United States to convert to the international metric system (Mr. McClory).
4) H.R. 4549 (March 10, 1975): To declare a national policy of converting to the metric system in the United States, and to establish a National Metric Conversion Board to co-ordinate the voluntary conversion to the metric system over a period of 10 years.
5) H.R. 5722 (April 8, 1975): To establish a program for the United States to convert to the international metric system (Mr. McClory and others).
6) H.R. 6077 (April 16, 1975): To provide a national program in order to provide assistance in making the international metric system the predominant system of measurement in the United States and provide for converting to the general use of such a system within ten years (Mr. Whitehurst).
7) H.R. 6154 (April 17, 1975): To establish a national policy relating to conversion to the metric system in the United States (Mr. Teague and others -- the so-called Administration bill).

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8) H.R. 6177 (April 18, 1975): To establish a program for planning and coordinating the conversion of the United States to the metric system of measurement (Mr. Symington).
9) H.R. 6264 (April 22, 1975): To provide for conversion of the United States to the metric system (Mr. Fraser).
10) H.R. 7353 (May 21, 197 5): To declare a national policy of converting to the metric system in the United States and to establish a United States Metric Board to coordinate the voluntary conversion to the metric system (Mr. Symington and others -- the so-called "consensus" bill).

Bill H.R. 7353 was marked up the full Committee on Science and Technology, and emerged on July 16, 1975 as a clean bill with a new number: H.R. 8674. Since there were more than 25 sponsors for the consensus metric bill, it was also assigned the next serial number i.e. H.R. 8675. The Bill was finally passed by Congress (300 to 63) on September 5, 1975.

In the Senate, two major bills were introduced for consideration :
1) S. 100 (January 15, 1975): To provide a national program in order to make the international metric system the predominant but not exclusive system of measurement in the United States and to provide for converting to the general use of such system within ten years (Senators Pell and Inouye).
2) S. 1882 (June 5, 1975): To establish a national policy relating to conversion to the metric system in the United States (Senators Inouye and Paterson, by request).

On December 8, 1975, S.100 passed the Senate on a voice vote, with recognition of House number H.R. 8674. As the final version of the Senate bill differed slightly from the earlier House bill, agreement had to be reached on the final form of the metric legislation which would go to President Ford for his signature. Finally, the House of Representatives accepted the senate version of the legislation on December 11, 1975.

[16] For a concise discussion of agenda-setting, see Roberts, Donald F. and Christine M. Backen (1981), "Mass Communication Effects." *Annual Review of Pscyhology,* 1981, 32:307-56, esp. p. 323: "Agenda setting refers to the ability of the mass media to influence the level of the public's awareness of issues as opposed to their specific knowledge about these issues -- in Cohen's (1963) terms, what to think about as opposed to what to think."

[17] *The World's Greatest Dailies: Profiles of 50 Newspapers.* John Merrill and Harold Fisher. New York: Hastings House, 1980.

[18] *The New York Times Index* 1970-1980 (published annually). New York, NY: The New York Times Company.

[19] *Chicago Tribune Index* 1972 (Vol. 1) - 1980 (published annually). Wooster, OH: Bell & Howell, Inc., Microfilming Division.

[20] Apart from references under the head "Metric System", there were numerous references under "Weights and Measures", "Wine/Liquor Industry", "Sports/Athletic Events", "Automobile Industry," and "United States -- Gasoline Prices."

[21] *New York Times,* December 23, 1975, 1:22:2.

[22] See Footnote 13.

[23] *New York Times*, December 13, 1978, 3:1:1.

[24] "Inching Forward" *New York Times* editorial, December 9, 1975, 1:40:1.

[25] "Teaching the Metric System." *Chicago Tribune* editorial, April 26, 1975, 1:8:1.

[26] "Are you ready for metrics" by Jim Gallagher. *Chicago Tribune*, January 16, 1977, 9:19:1. Also see Jan 17, 2:1:1; Jan 18, 2:1:1; Jan 20, 1:8:1; Jan 20, 2:3:1; Jan 20, 3:2:1.

[27] "Are you ready for metrics?" by Jim Gallagher. *Chicago Tribune*, January 16, 1977, 9:19:1 (magazine section).

[28] "Toward the Metric System." *Chicago Tribune* editorial, January 20, 1977, 3:2:1.

[29] "One year's mileage left on U.S. highway signs." *Chicago Tribune* , April 26, 1977, 1:8:1. See also *New York Times*, May 1, 1977, 1;45:2.

[30] *Chicago Tribune*, June 25, 1977, 1:1:4. See also *New York Times* , June 25, 1977, 1:8:6.

[31] "Conversion of Road Signs to Metric System Given Up." *New York Times*, June 25, 1977, 1:8:6.

[32] "A metric system paradox." *Chicago Tribune* editorial. July 5, 1977, 3:2:1.

[33] "Weather Service cool toward metrics." *Chicago Tribune* , October 19, 1977. 3:10:2. Also refer *New York Times* , October 19, 2:2:1.

[34] Refer footnote 23.

[35] *Chicago Tribune* editorial, November 12, 1978, 2:6:1E.

[36] "On pronouncing 'kilometer.'" *Chicago Tribune* editorial, August 24, 1980, 2:4:1E.

[37] *New York Times* February 22, 1980, 2:4:6; March 1, 1980, 1:1:5.

[38] *New York Times*, March 4, 1980, 1:12:1.

[39] "Man from WAM! puts his foot down" by Bob Greene, *Chicago Tribune*, 11 April 1978, 2:1:4C. Also see August 16, 1978, 5:1:5C; September 27, 1978, 5:1:5C.

[40] "Where the metric system fails to measure up" by Justin M. Fishbein, *Chicago Tribune*, January 20, 1977, 3:4:1.

[41] *Chicago Tribune*, January 21, 1978, 3:4:3C.

[42] "Don't give an inch to metrics." *Chicago Tribune*, July 21, 1977, 3:3:3.

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[43] "The Not-So-Long, We-Love-You-Furlong Blues," by Noel Perrin. *New York Times* March 11, 1977, 1:27:1.

[44] Letter from George E. Weiner, *New York Times*, Dec. 21, 1975, 3:8:3.

[45] "Ten gallon hats never die." Letter from E.C. Shannon, *New York Times*, January 1, 1976, 1:16:4.

[46] *New York TimesNew York Times*, May 21, 1974, 1:40:5.

[47] Letter from J. Harold Nissen, *New York Times*, December 17, 1972, 3:15:3. See also letter from Biggs-Nystrom president, NYT, November 12, 1972, 3:5:6.

[48] Letter from C.A. Price, Professor of Plant Biochemistry, Rutgers University. *New York Times* October 26, 1971, 1:40:3.

KANT, KOHLBERG AND RACE RIOTS

Tom Westbrook

Accepted by the Qualitative Studies Division
of the
Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication

1990 Convention
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Kant, Kohlberg and Race Riots

Tom Westbrook
University of Texas
Qualitative Studies Division
AEJMC
August, 1990
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Given the complex matrix of sociological factors of a moral decision, this study delved into translating the Cognitive Moral Development (CMD) theories of Lawrence Kohlberg into a framework examining psychological moral decision making in journalists.

The study translates the three levels of CMD into sensationalism, community restoring, and principled news coverages. Then, through interviews of journalists focused on race riot coverage, elicits their thinking corresponding to Kohlberg's levels as they made news worthiness decisions.

It was found that journalists think on the principled level, but couch much of their conversation about principles in a community restoring phraseology. Many newsworthiness decisions were grounded in principle and community concerns, but they emphasized other competing concerns.

INTRODUCTION

Journalism's ethical considerations loom behind every front page story and nightly newscast. From various ethical codes adopted in the 1920s to today,[1] episodes of abuse produced new concerns in response to such things as a Pulitzer prize awarded for a story about a boy who never existed[2] and Watergate's backlash.[3]

Sensational news coverage fans a smoldering riot white hot. Reporters pick up parts of peoples' lives years later and splash them across the public's consciousness.[4]

Books framing journalistic ethics have abounded since the 1920s.[5] Ethical articles appear in *Journalism Quarterly* as seeming ethics fads have flashed and faded.[6] Yet, with all these emphases, the processes by which ethics may affect journalists and news production are sketchy. Veterans describe wrestling with their conscience and shortfalls,[7] but what frames ethical struggles for them? College journalism ethics courses proceed as though ethical problems arise within and are defined by the craft's practice. But is it enough to avoid conflicts of interest, or balance the public right-to-know with an individual's privacy? Striking a balance between an individual citizen's rights versus society's needs has become convoluted.

Recent interviews of editors reveal some[8] to see ethical considerations as contained in the craft's practices. Others see internal processes within the journalist defining major ethical considerations. What of journalists' "internal processes" which define major ethical considerations? Do they "mature" in their moral cognitive thinking as they practice the craft? Moral cognitive maturation calls for thinking in the personal, then the group/societal, and finally the principled levels. Do journalists' "maturation" in moral reasoning reflect in newsworthiness decisions while handling news items?

Past studies center on the handling of the craft in stories.[9] This paper sets out to translate a body of theory, moral cognitive development, into a schema interpreting journalistic tenets for covering ethically sensitive materials, and into the maturation of journalists themselves.

THEORY

Journalists' personal beliefs and issues touch the shaping of every news story. When covering a story she places certain news story elements in the first paragraphs. Craft considerations determine "who, what, when, where, why, and when." But what determines which "why" among a plethora of causes--which "who" from two sides of personalities?

Most ethics articles in *Journalism Quarterly* deal with practicing the craft of journalism. Editorial decisions,[10] tape recorders,[11] conflicts of interest,[12] sensationalism,[13] professionalism,[14] and treatment of errors[15] are covered as though "prudent" practice equalled ethical practice.

Craft considerations, or organizational postures and policies, cannot account for all nuances, slants, or stands taken within stories. A journalist's personal encounter with this news story, and her first story of this type indelibly mark her psyche. Biases in a journalist's emotional make-up color word choices, prioritize certain facts over others. What internal reasons set a story's climate by choosing this adjective, this or that verb for inclusion in the inverted pyramid's opening?[16] How does one account for nuances, "slants" and "spins" placed on the same incident from newspaper to newspaper?

The idea that newspeople change their views on most subjects in the first two years in the trade [17] causes one to ask--are those changes part of a maturation process?

Lawrence Kohlberg's Theoretical Contribution

Lawrence Kohlberg asserts that adults mature **through 7 stages of growth in three levels:**[18]

* **Two stages (1 & 2) in level I** -- pre-conventional thinking, where conduct is controlled externally in two ways, commands or pressures. One's motive is to avoid punishment or obtain rewards.

* **Two stages (3 & 4) in level II** -- conventional thinking, which defines morality as conforming to expectations of others and maintaining social order by submitting to external controls of significant others' and authority figures' power of expectations.

* **Three stages (5, 6 & 7) in level III** -- post-conventional thinking which deals with moral principles. Here morality acts in accord with shared "universalizable"[19] standards. Conduct control has internalized both the standards and the decisions to act.

In the first, pre-moral level, conduct is controlled externally in two ways.[20] One's standards are external in the form of commands or pressures, and one's motive is to avoid punishment or obtain rewards. Within level one, stage 1 defines good and bad in terms of obedience or disobedience to rules and authority. Stage 2 acts are instrumental in providing satisfaction to the self and occasionally others and are therefore "right."[21]

The second level defines morality as conforming to the expectations of others and maintaining the social order. Conduct control is still external in that significant others and authority figures hold a power of expectations. In the second level, stage 3, gaining approval, helping others and pleasing significant others are paramount. In stage 4 the goals become "doing one's duty," showing respect for authority, and maintaining the social order for its sake.[22]

The third level is that of moral principles. Here morality is defined as acting in accord with shared standards which are purportedly "universalizable."[23] The possibility of conflict between two accepted standards is accepted. Conduct control is internal in two respects. The standards are internal, and the decision to act is based on an internal process of thought and judgment.

In stage 5 of level III right and wrong are defined in terms of laws with rational bases. Stage 6 is the morality of individual principles of conscience. The orientation is not only to existing laws, but to conscience as an appeal to mutuality and universality. The late developing stage 7 is reserved for those who touch the "noumenal"[24] and become philosopher kings in essence.

Kohlberg's body of work concerning a maturation in moral cognitive reasoning, and those basing their research on it, represent the largest theoretical framework in the field. Critics abound, theoretical replacements do not.

Criticisms of Kohlberg gave rise to the considerations for this thesis. These criticisms seem to present Kohlberg as tailor-made to study moral cognitive reasoning *among journalists*.

In one criticism, Kohlberg used Kantian theories of justice in formulating his theories. This is not so much an attack on stages as it is conceptualizing those stages, and internalizing those moral standards. Kohlberg derived his justice concepts from Emmanuel Kant,[25] who wrote that moral rules can have no empirical source and that includes goals. Kant's "noumenal world"[26] is utterly "unknowable," known in faith only. The noumenal will can not be rationally proven--nor rationally disproven seemingly safeguarding religious morality from rational criticism.[27]

Kant also used "autonomous" in a fashion contrary to current usage. Kant based autonomy on nothing in this world such as reasoning or one's own goals, but on absolute obedience to internal, incomprehensible demands of the noumenal will. Piaget and Kohlberg both harken back to this in Piaget's autonomous stage and Kohlberg's principled level.

Kant characterized morality as duty. From that comes two approaches--the formalistic and altruistic. Kohlberg appears to follow the formalistic. Formalistic thinkers agree that personal goals are non-moral and that moral rules must take a form of universalizable categorical imperatives that apply primarily to social relationships.[28] Here lies the appeal to Kohlberg and logical positivism.

Moral rules or imperatives must be universalizable--and therefore rational. The imperatives also apply primarily to social relationships. If social, then external, if external then verifiable, and possibly quantifiable.

The ideas of justice promoting a healthy society appear in level II (stages three and four.)[29] The idea that justice is itself an ideal, a principle of behavior is inherent in level III (stages 5, 6 and 7.)[30]

Kant's justice theories tipped to society's side in a societal/individual balance.[31] Justice concepts weigh in favor of the mass rather than the individual. Journalisms concepts such as justice are "mass" concepts.[32]

The media by definition are *mass* communication devices. The "public right-to-know" helps formulate any journalist's conceptions of newsworthiness. The agendas that are set are set due to the *mass* nature of the media which comes down solidly on society's side, rather than the individual's.

Eudaimonians[33] criticize Kohlberg because the Standard Issues Test (SIT).[34] restricts itself to the moral *cognitive* process, and shies away from the moral action. Kohlberg's research problem is how to quantify moral cognitive development. In the SIT an action is not measured, but reasoning producing the action is important. Two different reasoning "paths" may produce the same action. The same reasoning may produce differing actions. Therefore, actions are divorced from their reasoning, and Kohlberg only analyzed reasoning. Loew[35] agrees with Kohlberg when he concludes, "Moral virtue resides more in the making of a decision, and the agony of making it than it does in the potentially fallible decision itself."

A journalist goes to jail in a summary contempt procedure of the court. Defying the court, in and of itself is not scored in SIT scoring. The reason for defiance is paramount. If the journalist is jailed protecting a source he may be scored as a stage 4.

If to defend the concept of First Amendment freedom she might be scored stage 6. Morally courageous acts *per se* aren't accounted for in the SIT--although many argue a maturity in acting on one's moral convictions.[36]

This line of criticism is joined by a philosophical criticism of another stripe. Kohlberg is void of personalism[37] in stage 5 and stage 6 thinking.

Kohlberg is also criticized by everyone from Christians to Eudaimonians. Either there are no universalizable concepts for post-conventional thinking, or the concepts aren't Judeo-Christian or Eudaimonian. Perhaps the most fundamental problem with Kohlberg's theory is that it rests on the assumption that he or anyone can find a universal principle of justice or fairness. Kohlberg relies heavily on Rawls who proposed an ingeniously simple, seemingly objective analytic device, the "veil of ignorance," for generating universal-moral principles.

> If one does not know what one's position in society will be, then even a purely rational, egoistic point of view will lead one to prefer a just society--a society that best represents the interests of everyone.[38]

Problems arise when notions about justice can compete equally well in applied situations. On what basis should society's scarce resources be redistributed? Should the basis be individuals' needs, individuals' productivity, or an equal distribution?[39]

If Kohlberg, because of Kant, comes down on the societal side of the individual/societal balance, then the use of justice problems in the SIT and its scoring guides are societally "skewed." Journalists, serving a "public right to know," weigh heavily on the societal rather than personal side of the balance. Personal privacy is light in the balance against news tenets bounding public officials and figures for limited or unlimited use.[40]

No other industry guards justice(s) or moral constructs enabling society to function as does journalism. For its own perpetuation, journalism protects justice issues like free speech and societal responsibility. So journalists should be more sensitized to "societally scoped" moral issues than any other sector. Journalists should identify with Kohlberg's "societally skewed" constructs.

If the act of journalists practicing their craft does "mature" them in their thinking toward principled moral reasoning, then this could be ascertained. It should show up in their work--how they think of their work.

Narrowing the Focus

This paper focuses on one segment of one ethically sensitive issue--race, specifically, race riots. Miami's riots have flared in Liberty City, Overtown and the Grove four times since the Martin Luther King riots. The cognitive moral maturity of journalists should show up in their newsworthiness discussions of the race riots.

Riots' coverage will depend, in part, on journalists' moral cognitive maturity. First, does Moral Cognitive Maturity, as proposed by Kohlberg, translate into a simple schema delineating expected types or levels of coverage for a riot? Second, when journalists discuss their role in the riot, do they reflect those expected types or levels of coverage?

First, during a riot there will be riot coverage showing facets of sensationalism, analysis, investigation into causes and redress of those causes, personal interest, drama, editorials, and history--all providing news angles for a newsworthy item. Riots are sensational. However sensational a riot may be, other coverage concerns evidence themselves--restoring the community to order, rebuilding, correcting causes of the riot. These must all be covered.

Translating Kohlberg's Paradigm into Journalistic Coverages --

Sensationalism is superficial and assumed to be cognitive morally immature. It crassly markets and exploits genuine news items.[41] It strongly hints at stage 2 thinking on the reporters' and editors' viewpoints.

Second, concerns for community and order mark stage 3 and stage 4 thinking in Kohlberg's schema. Translating these theoretical stages into journalistic jargon centers on community restoring language focusing on a return to community norms. Community Restoring coverage in newspapers is concerned with society's coping, restoring agencies. These include police, firemen, medical/hospitals, courts, mayor's office, commissioners, state and federal agencies or personalities. Community restoring coverage signals journalists' stage 4 cognitive moral maturity in Kohlberg's schema.

Third, in complete coverage of a riot, some of it must address causes or principles. Principles and the rational or moral reasonableness of laws are the hallmarks of stage 5A, 5B and 6 thinking. Translating these stages in Kohlberg's schema into news coverage seeks coverage dealing with principles and causes in a morally sensitive issue such as freedom, rights, conditions, repression, racism and so on. These reveal journalists' or editorial concepts that they believe should guide coverage of the crisis and its possible resolution.

This last part of news critique -- contextualization and covering the issues -- has been debated for decades, and provided a backdrop for at least one Menken-Pulitzer duel.[42]

The more principled coverage there is, the more it signals cognitive moral maturity by journalists and editors on at least a stage 5 in Kohlberg's schema.

As a flagship for the Knight-Ridder chain, the *Herald* would be thought to have a morally mature editorial board. That mature board's editorial choices would influence the content of its news stories in something morally sensitive like riot stories.

METHOD

This paper hopes to establish a strand of cognitive moral growth by interviewing print newspeople at the pinnacle of their careers who would have benefitted from those careers' ethical quandaries and moral cognitive maturity. If moral cognitive growth continues through the journalists' careers, then it should show up in interviews where they share ethical struggles in their career that are not only craft oriented, but internal and personal as well.

Interviews of journalists centered on race riots which have been assumed to be at least in part, ethical-moral issues. Journalists should open up on personal beliefs or frames of reference concerning those sensitive issues when focused on their part in the riot coverage.

In those interviews, if suppositions for translating moral cognitive maturity into journalistic jargon and practice were correct, then some of the journalists' comments will fall into categories of community restoring and principled comments when discussing a morally sensitive issue.

Community restoring thinking is defined in interviews where journalists continually stress community concerns, community action and community based definitions for morality. Principled thinking would evidence itself in interviews when causality, issues or underlying principles are stressed.

I planned to interview editors and journalists from the *Miami Herald*. I was able to track down and interview one editor who worked for the *Miami News.*

The *Herald* regularly holds discussions on difficult issues, ethical considerations, and moral principles.[43] It is considered a paper of record for Miami, and increasingly, for South America and the Caribbean. The *Bay View*, the in-house publication for journalists, might carry some of the ethical discussion of riot coverage.

RESULTS

Sixteen interviews lasting 45 minutes were recorded during May of 1989 as the *Herald* closed out its riot coverage follow-up plan. These were lead writers and editors on duty when the 1989 riot story broke. Most of them had covered at least one other riot--four have lived in Miami for all riots 1968 to present.

Interviews remained focused on riot coverage and how journalists saw that coverage. They were free to generalize about the newspaper's coverage or other journalists and did so. In that context, journalists expressed more opinions, and guiding constructs. When an interview turned to "ethics" journalists spoke of craft considerations, almost as if it were a knee jerk reaction.

The interviews produced this discussion. Journalists see many factors influencing riot coverage. The complex, convoluted event's coverage has many factors beyond the scope of this investigation. Some of those factors follow.

General Factors and Influences of Riot Coverage

The riot is a personal, emotional, fatiguing trauma for those exposed to it.[44] "I get depressed, cynical when I try to explain what is happening."[45]

The past riots' explosiveness never leaves their thinking, [46] and the repetitive nature of rioting in Miami since 1968 brings concerns for carelessness.[47]

The '60s way of organizing a riot for a purpose lingers,[48] and because of that and other factors, worry over a story's reception weighs heavily on all. "We got charges that we are 'agents provacateur.'" [49] This underlay a debate whether to call it a riot or civil disturbance.[50] "Even with the loss of life, Capen[51] is concerned with Miami's image."[52]

National attention bearing on Miami plays in the 1968 riot during the Republican National convention[53], the 1883 Orange Bowl,[54] and the 1989 riot before the Super Bowl.[55] Whether a news-hole or an image consciousness decision, the riot coverage drops on the convention's opening day, the Orange Bowl's day and the Super Bowl's day.[56]

Notice the following statements' conflicting signals about causes and objectivity.[57] "We decided to call it a civil disturbance -- We decided not to categorize it."[58] And, "I approach this with no pre-conceived notions. Riots occur because of unnecessary police force. . . . All police shootings are unnecessary."[59]

Color consciousness touches all considerations. "We, rightly so, bend over backwards for the black community."[60] Empathy for people in the black community, independent of issues surfaces in discussions.[61] The *Herald* is not color sensitive to blacks only. A "Fort Herald" mentality that doesn't reach Hispanics is a concern.[62] Hispanics represent 40+% of the potential readership of Dade now.[63]

Some concerns come under a production heading. Career advancement pushes the process. Inexperience plays a hand [64] as does a paper's publication time,[65] the staff's confidence in the coverage,[66] News-hole space and story crafting considerations color stories.[67]

The *Bay View*, which is the *Herald's* internal news piece, carried the newspaper's riot coverage for two weeks. "I refer to the R-word, the one that rhymes with diet that reporters and editors were forbidden to use in copy and headlines except when the unspeakable was spoken by someone else. Who commanded it?"[68] "'Riot' has connotations beyond its dictionary definition. Using it in copy evokes images of Newark, Watts, and Liberty City. Miami Riot No. 4 of the decade wasn't as bad as that. "I(We) gave our readers not journalistic shorthand but a fair account of what was happening."[69]

All these forces are granted. They form a rich, complex context for discussing riot coverage in Miami or any city. But with them two other forces evidenced themselves in interviews.

Principled Coverage in Interviews

The desire to do principled coverage comes across in interviews when staff mention causes. The journalists grapple with their role in addressing causes of riots, and the principles behind those causes. They do this while talking of "effecting change."

"We came up with a plan for coverage.[70] We wanted to know how to effect a change!" "Ultimately our job is to write stories that make people stop and re-assess their own attitudes toward the world and change. Any good journalist can react--it's instinct. After the flames die down, then what? We believe we are smarter now than we were."[71]

"God knows--The truth has a lot more context. A lot more depth."[72] "We were thorough, careful, gave perspective from the outset.[73] We still hadn't brought it out to make the authorities do something, to get a response. We spent one and a half years in court to get the records."[74]

"We see these can be repeated. The complicated causes may not be addressed. We don't solve them, but I'm not saying we shouldn't. We attempt to explain what's going on."[75] "We want to go below the surface and get at the causes of the event."[76]

"It is our job to point out what is rational and what is irrational. We feel integration is not working. Dade is still segregated. We showed it. Now the board has to react to the pressure."[77] "The Civil Rights Movement passed through here and passed Miami by 20 years ago."[78] "I think the riots do happen for a reason, it is a rational response -- it is not a helpful response."[79]

As journalists explore their job in addressing principles or causes, they also delve into the causes and principles behind those causes in rioting.

"Their motives were complicated--curiosity, rage, opportunism."[80] "We get reports that the riot was about having a good time."[81] "There was an exuberance, a curiosity--almost as if there were nothing better to do."[82]

A repetitive theme is that "Cubans' ascendency is so clear."[83] "It was a black victim, shot by a white, I know that's Hispanic in some places, but in this town's nomenclature, he's white."[84]

The blacks do not just fall lower, they disintegrate socially. "I was fascinated that the blacks were losing any sort of infrastructure they ever had. In '89 we had enough background to recognize parallels physically, geographically, circumstances were so similar."[85]

Causality has circles within circles for the journalists. "All have motives in pursuing the case--the press, the defense attorney, and the prosecutor."[86]

Principles are used as causes. "There is the inner city poverty, despair and pathology. The riots aren't truly periodic. The causes are special to Miami." "It has become a learned behavior. Now there is a police shooting, a mob gathers, the police cordon off the area, there are brilliant television shots, two days and it's over."[87] "Instinctively, reflexively you believe that the riot follows to some degree."[88]

"There is a crazed hatred now, a changing in racism. There are contributors like cop beating. (Blacks) continued within guidelines (until '68) laughing and scratching. Now there is a lot of the equal rights stuff, and they are self-righteous with it all. These answer the lynch mobs from the whites coming back at them as a black lynch mob."[89]

As the journalists try to define their role and society's role they also talk of restoring the community.

Community-Restoring Coverage in Interviews

"There is a sense wherein we patronize the black community. This was pretty balanced, we tracked groups (NAACP), the police, and our own investigative reporters."[90] "As long as any sector believes they are denied their pie wedge due to ethnicity, true or not, then it will be intolerable. I try to put myself in empathy with black people. They obviously feel it's intolerable. I report 'They feel that way.'"[91]

Repeatedly, how to label the incident is defined within perameters of community impact. "We were correct in not calling it a riot."[92] "Whatever the people we interview call it, we'll call it."[93] "It was not broadly based. It was first a criminal element of 300-400. In the '82-3 riot, it was broader in involvement."[94]

The community restoring drive comes through with frustration. "They start making commissions without any power, and place a band-aid on a massive problem. You need to scrape the wound from the bottom and clean it out, then let the pain start giving way to the healing."[95] "If blacks continue to riot, this will never be good for the community, it can't progress as it needs to."[96]

Community integrity or concern gives context or a "language" for discussions of morality. "I don't think of it as a moral issue, good--bad; right--wrong; immoral--moral. It is an issue of vital importance to the community."[97]

"What started it? What is needed to defuse it? How widespread is it? What do we need to do to warn people? Is it organized or random? There is a tendency to sweep it under the rug--to protect the image. At the next city meeting, 'We've got to deal with this!' At the second meeting, 'We need to deal with this --' quieter. At the third meeting it's quieter still. At the fourth meeting it's not even an agenda item. The press of other matters, has stolen the focus and other news has made us go on to other stories also."[98]

Not taking sides is objectivity--yes. But bringing the issue up again is agenda setting. It is also the drive to restore the community, to address causes and principles. "We reported it well without taking sides. The city said, 'We are gong to set up job fairs!' 'Oh? Check it!'[99] We take no side."[100] "We knew we had to walk a tightrope--we didn't want to be inciteful, although we would be charged with that later. We didn't want to do a cover up. We knew it might not calm the city, but that's not our job."[101]

Restoring so disparate a community is frustrating. "I wish our reporters had known the area better, rather than giving it a feel of foreign correspondents."[102]

The journalists did indicate in interviews that higher stage thinking guides their thoughts.

Qualitatively, journalists intimated that they use and adapt higher stage thinking for the readership as they perceive it. They think in principled fashion, and talk on a community restoring level.

DISCUSSION

The intent of this paper was to show that moral cognitive development can explain some of the thinking processes journalists show when presented with ethical choices. Among those ethically sensitive possibilities, race riots were selected because they touch large sections of a city quickly, with an entire city's attention galvanized for a time. That would bring heightened coverage--and that coverage would belie the underlying constructs with which journalists approach the riot(s).

The question is, if moral cognitive maturity is a viable force in journalists' maturation, does it influence what they consider to be newsworthy in a large, multi-facetted story? Will they select certain types of coverage in accord with categories drawn from moral cognitive maturity levels?

The study provided enough interview material to sketch how journalists and editors use community restoring and principled language. The study was able to show that categories of coverage extrapolated from Kohlberg's levels can account for parts of race riot coverage, and even show patterns of coverage for those riots.

If Noelle-Newmann is correct[103] and journalists can discern an attitudinal climate around them, then the possibility of self-selecting those climates where one fits best is also possible.

The job description for a journalist would call him or her to current issues and an involvement in community affairs. The self-selected path of life experiences could explain some of the increases in moral cognitive development among journalists. Developmentally, there appear to be two pathways with discernible differences.[104] Those on the path of high development exhibit some of the following traits:[105]

- Receive better grades
- Read more
- Plan to go to college
- Try to learn new things[106]
- Associate with more academically inclined friends
- More interested in meeting new friends
- Interested in broadening their experiences
- Try to make sense of social orders in which they live
- Assume more responsibility for what happens to them[107]

These present many qualities of good journalists.

The exposure to the ethics and laws of the industry starts a process of cognitive moral growth that proceeds throughout a career. The business of journalism is itself a cognitive moral educator unlike any other profession. What if something very strong in a journalist's life-education causes them to "balance" principled thinking with community oriented or societally based thinking? Instead of viewing the process as a blind concept of maturation, what if it were a compartmentalization capability of journalists?[108]

What if journalists had to learn to shift from thinking of principles to how to present those principles to a readership they believe they know in terms the community will understand?

In other words, journalists and editors exhibit principled thinking in the interviews--but they present that principled thinking through the use of community restoring by-words. Those by-words sound out, balance or report the perceived needs of different societal segments. Those by-words watch society or government to see if they make good on promises that addressed causes of the riots.

It would appear that the continuing process of moral cognitive maturation influences a journalist's definition of newsworthiness itself. For the sake of discussion, looking at the ethics as though they were craft or organizational and beliefs/"ethics" as though they were internal is fine. But in the production of news, a journalist comes to the story with beliefs and ethics that filter his or her ability to accomplish the craft's demands of objectivity or fair and accurate reporting. Remember the seemingly contradictory comments?

The organization has ethical procedures to refine, edit, or conform the story. The higher the story goes in the editorial process, the men and women who edit it bring their own mix of internal ethically precious beliefs and understanding of the organization's ethical constraints.

According to the journalists a complex web of causes contribute to the riot coverage. A steady undercurrent of how to restore the community after such a trauma and how to effect changes in the causes plays throughout their statements.

In a limited look at only one morally sensitive issue, there appears to be evidence of cognitive moral thinking. Whether that cognitive moral thinking can be extrapolated to a maturity appears to be possible based on interviews with journalists. These levels and categories would seem to be shaping stories to bring information, expose wrongs and deviance, and redress injuries society should feel.

That mix of internal beliefs and external craft/ethical constraints works within a craft that struggles with ethics in producing news society desperately needs. This study targeted the internal ethical and moral workings in journalists--beyond craft considerations. It has shown that the Kohlberg schema can explain portions of coverage.

The mix of internal moral cognitive thinking and craft-ethical constraints in each editor helps decide the newsworthiness of the lead in tomorrow's page one stories or in sports or business sections. That crucible's mix in each news person finds a "feel" about the crisis that is newsworthy in its own right, but whose handling orients readers to ethical concerns and responses an informed readership must hold to, wield, and work out.

But in all stories, from how many accidents are covered with what kind of pictures, to conditions in the projects between riots, moral reasoning and resultant ethics come into play in each journalist's deliberations of newsworthiness.

Endnotes

1. Frank W. Scott, "The Illinois Code," *Journalism Quarterly*, 2:2:28.

The ASNE Canons of Journalism was adopted in 1923.

The SDX Code of Ethics was adopted in 1926.

2. "Post Reporter's Pulitzer Prize is Withdrawn," *Washington Post*, 16 April 1981, p.1.

3. Harvey Saalberg, "Canons of Journalism: A 50-year Perspective," *Journalism Quarterly*, 50:4:731.

Clifford G. Christians, "Media Ethics Courses Have Increased Since 1977," *Journalism Educator*, Summer 1985, p.17.

4. *Sidis v. F-R Pub. Corp.*, 113 F.2d 806 (2d Cir.1940);

Underwood v. First National Bank (Minn. Dist. Ct., 3d Jud. Dist. Steele County, 1982), 8 Med. L. Rptr. 1278.

5. Nelson Crawford, *The Ethics of Journalism*, (New York; Alfred A. Knopf, 1924); Leon Flint, *The Conscience of the Newspaper: A case Book in the Principles and Problems of Journalism*, (New York: D. Appleton, 1925); William Gibbons, *Newspaper Ethics: A Discussion of Good Practice for Journalists*, (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Bros., 1926)

6. Harvey Saalberg, "The Canons of Journalism: A 50 Year Perspective," *Journalism Quarterly*, 51:511-15.

7. Author interviewed Walter Cronkite, 17 October 1988, Jones College of Communication, University of Texas at Austin. He wished he had resigned as UPI Moscow chief when Soviet censorship made a mockery of his job.

8. Rilla Dean Mills, "Newspaper Ethics: A Qualitative Study," *Journalism Quarterly*, 60:4:594.

9. Katherine C. McAdams, "Non-Monetary Conflicts of Interest," *Journalism Quarterly*, 63:4:700-705; Juan Jose Tablada, "Newspaper Ethics: A Spanish-American View," The Journalism Bulletin, 3:2:1-7; Susan M. Kingsbury, et al., "Measuring the Ethics of American Newspapers Spectrum Analysis of Newspaper Sensationalism," *Journalism Quarterly* 10:93-108.

10. Douglas Anderson, "How Managing Editors View and Deal with Ethical Issues," *Journalism Quarterly* 62:341-345.

11. S. Elizabeth Bird, "Newspaper Editors' Attitudes Reflect Ethical Doubt on Surreptitious Recording," *Journalism Quarterly*, 62:2:284-88.

Sam G. Riley and Joel M. Wiessler, "Privacy: The Reporter and Telephone and Tape Recorder, *Journalism Quarterly*,51:3:511-5.

12. Katherine C. McAdams, "Non-Monetary Conflicts of Interest for Newspaper Journalists," *Journalism Quarterly* 63:3:700-705.

13. Susan M. Kingsbury, et al., op cit., This is just the first of seven articles. All seven had some form of attack on objectivity or sensationalism in American newspapers.

14. Karen Slattery and Jim Fosdick, "Professionalism in Photojournalism: A Female/Male Comparison," *Journalism Quarterly*, 56:243-247.

Kim B. Rotzoll and Clifford Christians, "Advertising Agency Practitioners' Perceptions of Ethical Decisions," *Journalism Quarterly*, 57:425-431.

15. James G. Schneider, "What is Paper's Responsibility for Error in Supplement?" *Journalism Quarterly*, 61:905-907.

16. Pamela Shoemaker, "Bias and Source Attribution," *Newspaper Research Journal*, 5:1:29, 1983.

17. Lee Becker, J.W. Fruit and S.L. Candell, *The Training and Hiring of Journalists*, (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex Publishing Co., 1987), Mann, "Students Reject News due to Negative Views," *Journalism Educator*, 43:60-62.

18. Lawrence Kohlberg, *Essays on Moral Development, Volume I The Philosophy of Moral Development, Moral Stages and the Idea of Justice*, (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1981) p 241. Late developing in that Kohlberg did not put this in his schema until the early '80s.

19. Ibid., 284.

20. Hoffman, op cit., p. 282-283.

21. Ibid., p. 283.

22. Ibid., p. 283.

23. Ibid., p. 284.

24. Greek for *spirit*. Kant purported this as the universalizable right which is known with something beyond pure reason, i.e. spirit. "Emmanuel Kant." *Philosophy of Religion* (New York:Eerdmans Publ. 1972)

25. Ibid.

26. Robert L. Campbell, "Moral Development Theory: A Critique of its Kantian Presuppositions", (A position Paper, University of Texas, 1983.)

27. Immanuel Kant, The Metaphysics of Morals, (Macmillan and Co., New York, 1989.) p. 48. Kant rejected Utilitarian conceptualizations of ethical thought because intuitionism explained more of what he saw happening as people made ethical decisions.

28. Ibid., p.5.

29. Lawrence Kohlberg, op cit., p. 47.

30. Ibid., p. 48.

31. Robert L. Campbell, "Moral Development Theory" op cit.

32. Ibid.

33. "An approach to morality radically different from Kant's derives from Aristotle. In Aristotle's view, the purpose of morality is to enable individuals to live the good life, to actualize their potentials as human beings, to achieve happiness or *eudaimonia*." Aristotle. "Nichomachean Ethics" translated by Terence Irwin, (Indianapolis, Indiana; Hackett Publishing Co. 1985) pp. 266 ff.)

34. Lawrence Kohlberg, op cit. Two-hour interviews focus on nine hypothetical moral dilemmas in which acts of obedience to laws, rules, or commands of authority conflict with the needs or welfare of other persons.

Kohlberg's interest is not in the action alternatives selected by the subjects, which presumably reflect the content of their moral values, but in the quality of their judgments as indicated by the reasons given for their choices and their ways of defining the conflict situations.

35. Erich H. Loew, "The Uncertainty of Certainty in Clinical Ethics," *The Journal of Medical Humanities and Bio-ethics*, (8:(1) Spr. '87 pages 28-33)

36. People from different points of the compass theologically, find common ground here. Robert L. Campbell op cit. would defend action as important as the motivation. Saint James chides Jews and Christians alike for inaction--irrespective of their thinking. James 1:22-27. *The Holy Bible*, New International Version, (New York: American Bible Society, 1978.) p. 1359.

37. Robert L. Campbell, op cit. Personalism is a philosophical opposite used by Campbell to protest the arid, beyond relationships reasoning used by Kant, adopted by Kohlberg. Campbell believes justice is highly relational, person oriented. He reacts to the priority of the rational over the relational in stages 5, 6 and 7.

38. J.A. Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge Massachusets, Harvard University Press, 1971)

39. Hoffman, op cit., p 288.

40. Chief Justice Warren in associated cases *Assoc. Press v Walker* and *Curtis Pub. Co. v. Butts*.

41. Susan M. Kingsbury et al., "Measuring the Ethics of American Newspapers: VI Laggards and Leaders in Ethical Journalism," *Journalism Quarterly* 11:284-300.

42. H.L. Menken, "Newspaper Morals," *Atlantic Monthly*, May 1914, 113:289-297. Ralph Pulitzer, "Newspaper Morals: A Reply," *Atlantic Monthly*, 113:773ff.

43. Telephone interview of Adon Taft, Religion Editor for the *Miami Herald*, 10 March 1989.

44. Joe, Past Editorial Writer for the *Miami News*, interview by Author, May 1989. Beverly, Reporter for *Miami Herald*, interview by Author, May 1989. She was laid on a porch and couldn't do anything for two hours until a National Guard Medic attended her. Beverly has covered riots since the 1968 riot.

45. Beverly, op cit. Beverly's way of coping with the cynicism was "I asked my church to lay hands on me and pray it wouldn't happen."

46. Eric, An editor at the Herald, on duty the night the 1989 riot story broke.

47. Cindy, Editor at *Miami Herald*, interview by Author, May 1989. Cindy worked 14 years at the *Herald*, left for another Knight Ridder paper as Publisher returned in '86.

48. Gerald, An editor at the *Miami Herald*, has covered all riots since 1968.

49. Samuel is a feature writer for *The Tropic* Sunday Magazine.

50. Eric, op cit. Anthony, "Riot." Cindy and Eric, "No." It isn't to that stage yet. Asked reporters coming back in, they said "no." All said "no" before the night was out. Columnist Hiassen, who has covered these since '70 really tore into this in an editorial.

51 Richard Capon has been publisher at the *Herald* since 1979. He is described by staff as "civic minded."

52. Samuel, op cit.

53 Joe, op cit. "There were all the hippies and tricky Dick- a lot of head cracking going on down there."

54. Gerald, op cit.

55. Cindy, Cindy left off two other stories - the execution of Ted Bundy, and the swearing in of George Bush.

56. Content Analysis was run as a concurrent study with this study.

57. Another way to say that might be that perceived principles and possible community restoration are in conflict.

58. Gerald, op cit.

59. Charon is one of the *Herald's* Pulitzer Prize winning reporters.

60. Scott, has reported on community reactions from 1970 forward on the riots.

61. Beverly, op cit.

62. Roger Lowenstein, "Miami Vise: The *Herald* Is Wooing Cuban Readers, But It Risks Loss of Anglos," *The Wall Street Journal*, 209:1, 5 March, 1987.

63. Ibid., The article centers on a memo from John Schueler, vice-president of circulation, to Richard Capen, Publisher. "In 1960, 79% of all households in Dade received the *Herald*. By 1985 the figure had dropped to 40%."

64 Eric, op cit. "Lots of "fearless" reporters showed up. I sent them home. The kid on the police monitor missed everything. On the second phone call I sent a team."

65. Cindy, op cit.

66. Eric, op cit.

67. Beverly, Samuel, op cit.

68. Arnold Markowitz, *The Bay View*, (Miami Herald, In house Publication:Miami, Florida, Jan. 30. 1989) p. 4

69. Cindy and then Gerald *The Bay View*, p.3.

70. There was a checklist of stories on Anthony's office wall planned out by him, Eric, Gerald, Cindy, Charon, Charisse L. Grant who is a reporter, and Beverly.

71. Anthony, is an editor at the *Herald*. The desire to not repeat trite follow-ups was expressed by Anthony. "Another story on the despair of the black community? Give me a break!"

72 Anthony, op cit. Anthony used the term "God knows" four times. In all four references, he was talking about the issues, the principles involved.

73. Gerald, op cit.

74. Gerald, op cit. We could have the incident use of force reports, (and collate the repetitive officers from that) but we had to go to court to get the Internal Investigation reports to see if they knew some of the Latin officers were overly zealous.

75. Anthony, op cit.

76. Gerald op cit.

77. Cindy, op cit.

78. Charon, op cit.

79. Samuel, op cit.

80. Charon, op cit. We tracked the records of 240 ('89) arrests for rioting. We wanted to and did interview 25 of them - why did you riot? It was hard to find any of them because they are so transient.

81. Anthony, op cit.

82. Joe , op cit.

83. Samuel, op cit.

84. Charon, op cit.

85. Eric, op cit.

86. Samuel, op cit. "The *Herald* had 'botched' the smurf page and needed to redeem itself. Joe op cit. - "Yeah, we beat the hell out of them on that ('82-'83) coverage." Janet Reno, Florida Attorney General unsuccessfully prosecuted the four officers in the Mcduffie incident, and Alvarez in Neville Johnson's death.

87. Samuel, op cit.

88. Joe, op cit.

89. Ibid. Joe used sensational language throughout the interview. "They are small holocausts, atrocities on the way to happening."

90. Scott, op cit.

91. Anthony, op cit.

92. Scott, op cit.

93. Gerald, op cit.

94. Scott, op cit.

95. Beverly, op cit.

96. Anthony, op cit.

97. Ibid.

98. Cindy, op cit.

99. Ibid. (Charon's story, some of them - yes.)

100. Anthony, op cit.

101. Eric, op cit.

102. Ibid.

103. Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth, *The Spiral of Silence: Public Opinion, Our Social Skin*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1984.) p. 154 ff.

104. James Rest and Deborah Deemer, "Life Experiences and Developmental Pathways," James R. Rest, *Moral Development*, op cit., p. 45

105. Deborah Deemer, "Life Experiences and Moral Judgement Development," Doctoral Dissertation, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1987. p. 137ff.

106. Ibid., p. 139.

107. Ibid., p. 141.

108. Henry Sidgwick, "Philosophical Intuitionism," in his book, *The Methods of Ethics*, (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Co., 1981.) Sidgwick looks not at levels of thinking, but at concurrently working methods in individuals.

TRENDS IN PROFITABILITY OF DAILY U.S. NEWSPAPERS
BY CIRCULATION SIZE
1978-1988

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"American newspapers are business enterprises as well as purveyors of information. If they do not meet the test of profitability that all businesses must meet, they cannot continue to perform their informational roles."
...Jon Udell[1]

INTRODUCTION

Udell, Compaigne, Lavine, Fink and Hynds[2] all make solid cases that newspapers should operate as profit-making enterprises so they can do an independent job of sharing the news. But information needed to calculate whether daily newspapers in various circulation sizes are profitable is scarce.

Newspaper economics research is extensive in specific segments such as circulation[3], ownership[4], competition[5], advertising[6], and management as it concerns economics[7]. Trade journals address various aspects of profit making on a regular basis[8].

Data on publicly held newspapers from a number of sources indicate that these companies make money. These include most of the major chains and newspapers with large circulations. Privately held companies seldom make such data available. According to Hynds:

> "While it is impossible to measure total industry profitability because private firms do not have to provide that type information, analysts say that the profits of well-managed, privately owned dailies are parallel to those of the publicly owned dailies that do report to the public....their after tax profit margins were said to average 10 percent of sales as compared with 6.9 percent for all printing and publishing, and 5.4 percent for all companies in *Fortune* magazine's list of the 500 biggest industrial firms."[9]

The financial performance of publicly held newspapers show that newspapers are profitable businesses. In looking at the newspaper publishing industry, Veronis, Suhler and Associates[10] report that operating income margins have averaged 18.9 percent over the last five years and have remained within one percentage point of the five year average in each of the last five years. A steady rise in revenue growth, in assets, in operating cash flow and in operating income has been seen during the past five years.

> "Measures of newspaper industry profitability exceed communication industry averages by a large amount. The newspaper industry's 19.3 percent 1987 pretax operating income margins, although representing a small reduction from 1986, was higher than the segment's 18.9 percent five year average...Newspapers continued to enjoy the highest return on assets of any segment of the communication industry: 25.5 percent for pretax operating income and 31 percent for operating cash flow.[11]

That same company's forecast for 1989 to 1993 suggests the communication industry to be the No. 2 industry in the country--second only to health and medical services, in terms of five-year growth. The communications industry is projected to grow 8.8 percent, and newspapers growth is projected at 8.1 percent.[12]

But these projections are based on information from only 37 companies.

Even so, when these publicly held newspaper companies are compared to other industries, newspapers appear profitable. According to _Fortune_ magazine's 500 list, publishing and printing are among the top money-makers whether the measure is return on sales, return on assets or return on stockholders equity. For the category called publishing and printing, return on sales is 7.1 percent putting it fifth in the list of money makers headed by pharmaceutical, forest products, beverages and tobacco. Although returns are down to 7.1 percent after being 8.4 in 1987 that compares to the median for all Fortune 500 companies which was 5.5 in 1988 and 5.1 in 1987.[14]

Yet, newspapers included in these publicly held companies may not be representative of the majority of newspapers in this country. Eighty-four percent of the newspapers in the country are small newspapers of less than 50,000 circulation, and some 69 percent are under 25,000.[15] While many are part of large chains, many are independent, privately owned papers or part of small, privately owned chains. These privately owned papers have no reason to report their profits or losses.

A consultant addressing the Colorado Press Association in 1987 told editors of small town newspapers that they should begin to worry if they are making less than 15 percent profit, and if their cash flow is below 35 percent.[16] That same figure was used by Otis Chandler of the Los Angeles Times a few years ago when he said small papers should expect a 15 percent profit and larger papers an 8 percent profit.[17]

An investment analysis, described as an essay on how newspapers make money, suggested that "smaller papers tend to show steadier earnings gains than bigger papers during economic downturns." 18

That analysis shows an industry composite from 1971 through 1980 with a 15.4 percent pretax profit margin, a 19.8 pretax return on assets, a 10.8 percent net return on assets, and a 19.1 percent net return on equity.

An image remains, however, that newspapers, especially the small town papers, are barely able to survive, despite a detailed study by Wright and Lavine[19] that looked at Inland data from 1959 to 1980 in constant 1959 dollars to create a profile of a typical 20,000 circulation daily newspaper. That study showed steadily increasing revenues and almost parallel increasing expenses with a slight downturn beginning in 1979.

Information about the distribution of the budgets of daily newspapers is also scarce. Simon and Bishop[20] looked at the distribution of the expenses at daily newspapers and the sources of revenue, as a percentage of total revenue for a composite daily newspaper. Using data from Editor and Publisher, annual reports and confidential material, they examined budgets of varying sizes of newspapers from 1947 to 1974 to create this composite, concluding that papers ranging from 10,000 to 25,000 could expect a 9.7 percent return on revenue before taxes. They add, however, that a well-managed paper, or a morning-evening combination, might easily double that rate.

For a portion of that period, it appeared that the number of dailies was growing. From 1963 to 1978 there was a net increase of 37 new newspapers; 238 newspapers closed and 276 new dailies were created.[21] Since 1978, however, the total number of newspapers has declined from 1,756 daily newspapers in 1978 to 1,642 in 1988.[22] Profitability may play a part in that decline.

It is the purpose of this study to look at three types of issues:

1. Are newspapers profitable compared to similar sized firms in other manufacturing industries?

2. What is the trend in profitability of various sized newspapers over time, and if there is a difference in trends across sizes is the difference between small firms and large firms' profitability becoming greater over time?

3. Are the variations in the profit margins due to general economic activity and if so, is one size newspaper affected more by the cyclical movement of the economy than another?

METHODS

Inland Press Association has collected data on costs, revenues and profits for 71 years. Until recently that information was seldom shared with researchers. Inland's data, in the form of annual summary reports, has been made available to this research team.[23]

Inland`s annual cost and revenue survey goes to all daily and weekly newspapers listed in Editor and Publishers Annual Yearbook. This study will deal only with the dailies. The Inland survey has gathered the same categories of information during the past 11 years with only minor variations. For example, until 1987 the category for part-time employees simply listed the number of part-time employees without indicating hours or amount of work. For the past two years, a more exact figure, based on Full Time Equivalents, has been requested. All other categories remain the same, providing an opportunity for comparison.

One apparent flaw in the Inland data is that this is a self-selected survey. Only those who care to respond will return the questionnaires and such self-selection may bias the results. Over the 11 years used in this study the average response rate has been approximately 20 percent. But the data may be less flawed than has been assumed. Stone[24] compared his own randomly selected, national newspaper economics survey with the self-selected, limited responses from both the Inland Press Association and the National Newspapers Association. His survey had a high rate of return. Comparing the three studies, he concluded:

> "These two studies, [Inland and NNA] even with low response rates and self selection of participants, seem as representative of the national spectrum of newspapers they seek to measure as are the randomly selected participants in the 1975 survey."[25]

Other apparent flaws were that the aggregate data by circulation size does not identify newspapers by chain or private ownership, does not indicate the competitive or non competitive market, or other variables such as location which may affect profitability.

Nor did the data provide asset information which would have been valuable for comparisons as more data exists for other industries in that form.

Another apparent drawback with these data were that they were presented in aggregate form. Each year, a group of 12 newspapers of a specific circulation range were grouped together so that characteristics of the specific newspapers within that group are not identifiable. And there was no consistency from one year to another within each group, making it impossible to know if the same newspapers were included each year. But economists use aggregate figures to transform individual relationships to a relationship for the group as a whole. Such data are used to describe relations for typical members of a group, and are accurate as long as the base is the same and if each member of the group behaved similarly.26 The standard deviation seen in the aggregate figures suggests that there is little variation within each group. These aggregates may not be a problem if it can be assumed that they represent a sample of the country and that such a sample will reflect the national trends.

This study specifically looked at clusters of newspapers by circulation size from the smallest dailies (2,000 circulation) to over 75,000 circulation. The Inland data were grouped in clusters of 12 newspapers in a specific circulation size (.i.e. between 2,000 and 5,000 circulation.) For purposes of this study, circulation clusters were adjusted into five larger subgroups to represent newspapers under 10,000 (referred to in all subsequent references as Group 1); between 10,000 to 14,999 (Group 2); from 15,000 to 24,999 (Group 3); from 25,000 to 49,000 (Group 4) and those over 50,000 (Group 5).

Because of the limitations of the data, this study looked only at the profit margins. Profit margin was defined as before tax profit from newspapers divided by newspaper revenue. This measures gross newspaper profit as a percentage of newspaper revenue. Because it was expressed as a percentage, comparisons could be drawn across firms regardless of size.27

The average before tax newspaper profit margins for each of the five groups in each of the eleven years included in this study were computed and compared. In addition, these figures were compared to average before tax profit margins from all manufacturing industries.

A precautionary note is in order here. It is impossible to find data from other industries that will be entirely consistent with the Inland data in terms of such things as consistency in the data reported and reporting procedures. Aggregate industry data, were, however, compiled by the U. S.

government and appear in the Internal Revenue Service's Statistics of Income: Corporation Income Tax Returns series and the Census Bureau's Census of Manufacturers.[28] The IRS data have the advantage of being reported according to size of firms based on business receipts whereas the Census of Manufactures data is categorized according to the asset size of business. Since the Inland data do not report assets of the participating firms, the IRS data were selected as most appropriate. The category selected for comparison was all manufacturing because paper and publishing activities are grouped in that category. Before tax profits reported in the IRS balance sheet were adjusted to be as consistent as possible with the reporting procedures used by Inland.

Casual observation does not allow firm conclusions as to the changes in the absolute profitability of various sized firms nor to changes in the relative profitability of these different sized firms. To find more conclusive results, time series analysis was employed. Time series analysis is a statistical technique commonly used in forecasting an economic time series.[29] An economic time series is simply a variable observed over several time periods. Therefore, profit margins observed between 1978 and 1988 constitute an economic time series.

Time series analysis assumes that an economic time series can be decomposed into four components: trend, seasonal variation, cyclical variation, and random influences. A trend is a relatively smooth, long-term movement of a time series.

Seasonal variation is the regular annual pattern that a time series exhibits. If data is annual, such as the Inland data, there will be no seasonal variation. Cyclical variations are variations in an economic variable that occur because of the business cycle or the general cyclical ebb and flow of economic activity. Finally, variations occur in an economic time series because of a variety of short-term, random forces other than seasonal, cyclical and trend forces.

Time series analysis of data was used to answer two sets of questions:

1. What is the trend in profitability of various sized newspapers over time, and if there is a difference in trends across sizes, is the difference between small firms' and large firms' profitability becoming greater over time?

2. Are the variations in the profit margins due to general economic activity, and if so, is one size newspaper affected more by the cyclical movement of the economy than another?

These questions address both the absolute change in profit margins for each size group over time and the relative change in profitability between groups. Therefore two types of time series variables are used in this time series analysis. The time series variable used to address questions of changes in absolute profitability is simply the profit margin observed over the sample time period (MARGIN). This results in five time series to analyze, one for each size group. The time series variable used to address questions of changes in relative profitability is the difference between the average profit margin of large firms (those with circulation over 50,000) and the profit margin of smaller firms. To calculate this variable, the profit margin of firms in each of the smaller groups in any year is subtracted from the average profit margin of those firms with circulation greater than 50,000 for the same year. This created four time series, one for each group below 50,000 circulation. This time series is named PROFDIFF.

Ordinary least squares regression was used to decompose these time series into their trend and cyclical components. Independent variables were:

TIME: a variable that ranges from 1 to 11. Time is a 1 for 1978, a 2 for 1979, a 3 in 1980 and so on until 1988 when TIME equals 11.

CU: Capacity utilization of manufacturing firms for the observed year expressed as a percentage.

INF: the percentage change in the hourly earnings of workers in manufacturing for the observed year.

CU and INF are measures of general economic activity. CU is an indicator of the level of real activity in the economy. The closer CU is to 100, the more capacity is being utilized by firms in the economy, and hence, the greater the level of real economic activity. High levels of CU represent expansionary periods; low levels represent contractionary periods. Other variables such as unemployment and percentage change in GNP also measure real economic activity. However, similar time series studies have found that CU performs better as a measure of economic activity in this type of time series analysis.[30]

INF is an indicator of the rate of inflation. Again, other variables, such as the Producer Price Index (PPI) can replace INF. INF was used in similar time series studies because it performs well as an inflationary measure.[31]

RESULTS

Newspapers in Group 1 averaged 6.4 percent profit with a minimum yearly mean of 4.4 percent in 1982 and maximum of 11.1 percent in 1978. For newspapers in Group 2, the minimum yearly profit was 8.3 percent in 1982, the maximum was 13.8 percent in 1978, and the overall mean during these years was 11.5 percent. Papers in Group 3 averaged 17.3 percent with a yearly minimum of 14.6 percent in 1988 and a yearly maximum of 19.3 in 1979. Group 4 papers averaged 19 percent over the eleven-year period with a yearly minimum of 16.5 percent in 1988 and a yearly maximum of 22.4 percent in 1984. Group 5 newspapers averaged 18.9 percent with a yearly minimum of 14.4 percent in 1982 and a yearly maximum of 24.2 percent in 1986.

The smallest newspapers in this study - those under 15,000 circulation -operate at a significantly lower profit margin than the larger newspapers - those over 15,000 circulation. Profit margins of newspapers with circulation less than 10,000 are nearly one-third the profit margins of papers over 25,000. Overall, once a newspaper reaches circulation size of 15,000, its profit margin is nearly the same as those newspapers with circulation size greater than 25,000.

Table 1 presents a summary of the profit margins for the five groups by circulation size during the period 1978 to 1988.

Comparing these figures with similar statistics from other industries during the same period provides further evidence of the profitability of both small and large daily newspapers. (See Table 2.)

For businesses with receipts from $500,000 to $1,000,000 the yearly minimum profit margin was -4.10 percent in 1983 and the maximum was 6.54 percent in 1978 with a mean of .777 percent; for those with receipts from $1,000,0000 to $5,000,000 the minimum was -.41 percent in 1983 and the maximum was 6.81 percent in 1978 with a mean of 2.55 percent; for those with receipts from $5,000,000 to $10,000,000 the yearly minimum was 1.69 percent in 1982 and the yearly maximum was 6.50 percent in 1978 with a mean of 3.84 percent; for those with receipts from $10,000,000 to $50,000,000 the minimum profit margin was .76 percent in 1983 and the maximum was 7.1 percent in 1978 with a mean of 4.53 percent.

As with newspapers, larger businesses are more profitable than smaller ones. In fact, in four out of nine years, the average profit margins for the smallest sized firms in this sample, those with receipts totalling between $50,000 and $1,000,000, were negative.

Group 1 newspapers profit margins can best be compared with the first group of manufacturing industries in Table 2; Group 2 and Group 3 newspapers with the second group; Group 4 newspapers with the third group; and Group 5 with the fourth group.

The profit margins for all manufacturing industries, based on IRS data, are lower than those for newspapers with similar receipts.

In Figure 1, the average profit margin for each of the five newspaper groups was graphed for the eleven years. Figure 2 shows average profit margins for manufacturing industries from 1978 to 1986.

As shown in Figure 1, in any year, the average profit margins of Group 1 and Group 2 are less than the average profit margins of Group 3, Group 4, and Group 5 for that same year. In addition, there appears to be significant variation across years in the profit margin of any one group, and the profit margins of some groups appear to vary more than others. This is borne out also by the standard deviations in Table 1 which show that variability is greatest in Group 5 and is significantly less in Group 3. Finally, casual observation of Figure 1 seems to indicate that the difference between profit margins of the smallest firms and those of the largest is becoming greater over time.

Casual observation, however, does not allow any firm conclusions as to the changes in the absolute profitability of different sized newspapers nor to changes in the relative profitability of these newspapers. To find more conclusive results, the time series analysis must be viewed.[32]

The R^2 statistic in regression analysis measures the percentage of variation in MARGIN explained by the three independent variables of TIME, CU (capacity utilization) and PPI (percentage of change in the producer price index for newspapers). The R^2 for Group 1 is .21 indicating that 21 percent of the variation in MARGIN for Group 1 is accounted for by changes in economic activity and long-term movement while the R^2 for Group 5 is .60 indicating that 60 percent of the variation in MARGIN for Group 5 is accounted for by these forces.

Since the R^2 for Group 5 (.60) is nearly three times higher than the next largest R^2 (.21), trend and cyclical influences account for a much greater proportion of the variation in profit margins for that group than for the other groups. The variation in profit margins for Group 5 can be said to be more systematic over time than the variation of profit margins of the other groups. The least amount of variation in the profit margin is explained for Group 3 (R^2 = .11), papers with circulation between 15,000 and 25,000. The movement in MARGIN over time is not due to long-term movement or to general economic activities, but rather to short-term, irregular forces.

The coefficients on TIME indicate the long-term trend in profit margins. A positive coefficient indicates an upward trend in profit margins; a negative coefficient indicates a downward trend. Groups 1 through 4 exhibited downward trends while Group 5 exhibited an upward trend in profits. The trend was strongest for Group 4 where on average each year the profit margin drops .9 of a percentage point. On the other hand, the coefficient on TIME for Group 5 indicated that profit margins for this group were rising on average .5 of a percentage point per year.

Therefore, the difference between the largest firms profit margins and the profit margins of the smaller newspapers appeared to be widening over time on average nearly 1 percentage point per year.

The signs of the coefficients on CU were positive for every group, as expected. Thus, as overall economic activity increased, the profit margins of all groups increased. The relationship was, however, much weaker for Group 3 and Group 4 than for Group 1, Group 2 and Group 5. Overall, increases in real economic activity had the greatest effect on those newspapers of under 15,000 circulation.

This suggests that when the economy was in an expansionary period, the smaller newspapers were likely to benefit from this expansion more than those whose size was greater than 15,000.

The signs of the coefficients on INF are negative for each group, indicating that as price levels increased, profit margins fell on average for these newspapers. Comparing the values of the coefficients and their significance levels across groups, inflation had the greatest effect on newspapers with circulations of more than 25,000 while it appeared to have little effect on those under 25,000.

In Table 3a coefficients and R^2 of those regressions using MARGIN as the dependent variable are presented. In Table 3b, the beta weights are presented.

Table 4 contains the same statistics for the regressions that used PROFDIFF as the dependent variable for each size group. These regressions differed from those in Table 3 because they showed whether the differential between small and large firms was becoming larger, smaller, or not changing over time. 33 A positive coefficient on TIME indicates that the differential between the largest firms and those that are smaller was getting greater over time while a negative coefficient indicted that this differential was closing over time.

As seen in Table 4, all coefficients are positive and close to 1 in magnitude, Therefore, the difference between the largest firms' profit margins and the profit margins of the smaller newspapers appeared to be widening over time on average nearly 1 percentage point per year.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis in this paper suggests the following conclusions:

First, in this study, newspapers of all sizes had a higher profit margin than manufacturing companies with comparable receipts. Profit margins calculated from IRS data for firms of varying sizes were consistently lower than the profit margins of newspapers with approximately the same amount of revenue.

Some have suggested that companies keep at least two sets of books - one for the tax collector and another for financial reporting purposes, and this may explain some of the differences in the profit margins between the data sets.[34] For example, profit returns reported in the IRS's Statistics of Income series were much more apt to be reduced by accelerated depreciation than those appearing in company annual reports. However, further evidence supporting the conclusion above was provided from Census of Manufactures' data that showed profit margins reported by manufacturing firms from 1985 to 1988 varying between 3.80 percent and 6.65 percent. During this same period, average profit margins of each newspaper group are above 10 percent. Therefore, even the smallest newspapers had a greater profit margin than the average profit margin of all manufacturing firms.

Second, the smallest newspapers (circulation size less than 15,000) had significantly lower profit margins than those above 15,000 circulation. This difference appears to be getting larger over time.

Finally, the business cycle does appear to have an effect on the profit margins of newspapers of all sizes. Profit margins were affected adversely by inflation for newspapers of more than 25,000 circulation, while increases in real economic activity resulted in greater profit margins for all newspapers, with the strongest correlation occurring for those papers under 15,000 circulation and greater than 50,000 circulation.

Conclusions in this paper were reached using the technique of time series analysis. Time series analysis does not attempt to explain why the industry is influenced by the business cycle. Instead, causal regression analysis must be used to find reasons behind a trend. We leave this to future research.

Table 1

Average Profit Margins for Newspapers, By Size of Group, 1978-1988

	Group				
	1	2	3	4	5
Average	6.4%	11.5%	17.3%	19.0%	18.9%
Standard Deviation	2.09	1.68	1.57	1.87	3.63
Minimum	4.4%	8.3%	14.6%	16.5%	14.4%
Maximum	11.1%	13.8%	19.3%	22.4%	24.2%

Table 2

Average Profit Margins for All Manufacturing Industries by Size of Receipts, 1978-1988

Size of Business Receipts (000)

	500-1,000	1,000-5,000	5,000-10,000	10,000-50,000
Average	.777%	2.55%	3.84%	4.53%
Standard Deviation	3.53	2.30	1.54	1.83
Minimum	-4.10%	-0.41%	1.69%	.76%
Maximum	6.54%	6.81%	6.50%	7.00%

Table 3

Time Series Analysis of Profit Margins of Newspapers in Each of Five Size Groups

Table 3a
Coefficients, Significance levels, and R^2s

Variable	Group 1	2	3	4	5
CU	.30*	.31*	.14**	.23*	.28*
TIME	-.56**	-.36	-.48**	-.59*	.20
INF	-.21	-.35	-.21	-.50*	-.94*
R^2	.21	.19	.11	.16	.60

* Denotes significance at the .05 level
** Denotes significance at the .1 level

Table 3b
Beta Weights

Variable	Group 1	2	3	4	5
CU	.31	.41	.18	.27	.26
TIME	-.42	-.35	-.44	-.52	.14
INF	-.23	-.52	-.29	-.64	-.99

Table 4

Time Series Analysis of the Difference in Profit Margins of Newspapers with Circulation Above 50,000 and Profit Margins of Newspapers in Each of Four Smaller Group Sizes

Table 4a
Coefficients, Significance levels, and R^2s

Variable	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
TIME	1.10*	.728*	1.07*	1.14*
CU	.053	.032	.207**	1.09**
DPM	-.215	-.255**	-.188	.161
R^2	.53	.55	.56	.44

* Denotes significance at the .05 level
** Denotes significance at the .10 level

Table 4b
Beta Weights

Variable	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
TIME	.60	.53	.65	.79
CU	.04	.03	.17	.19
DPM	-.17	-.18	-.17	.16

Figure 1

Profit Margins for Newspapers of Five Size Groups, 1978-1988

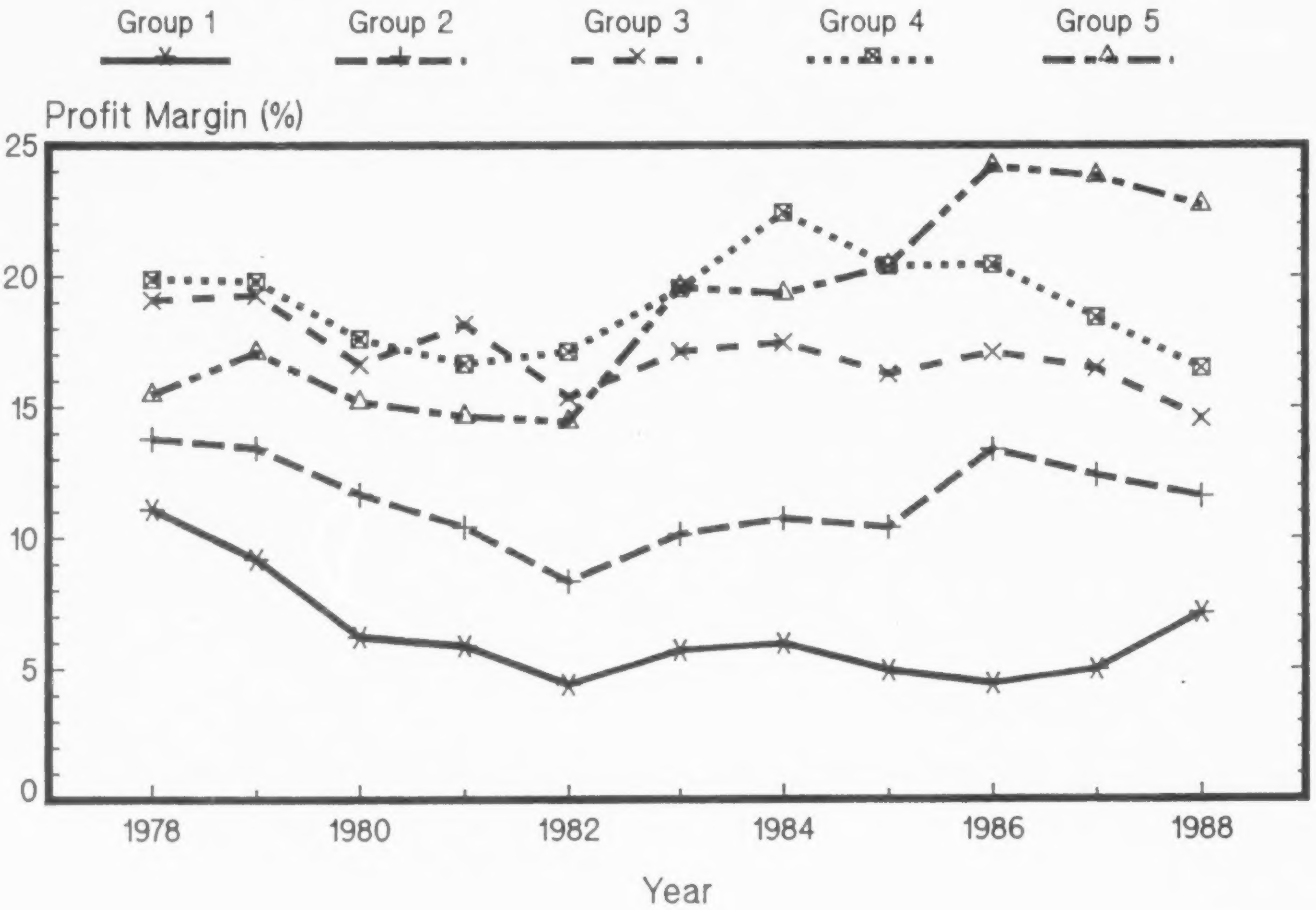
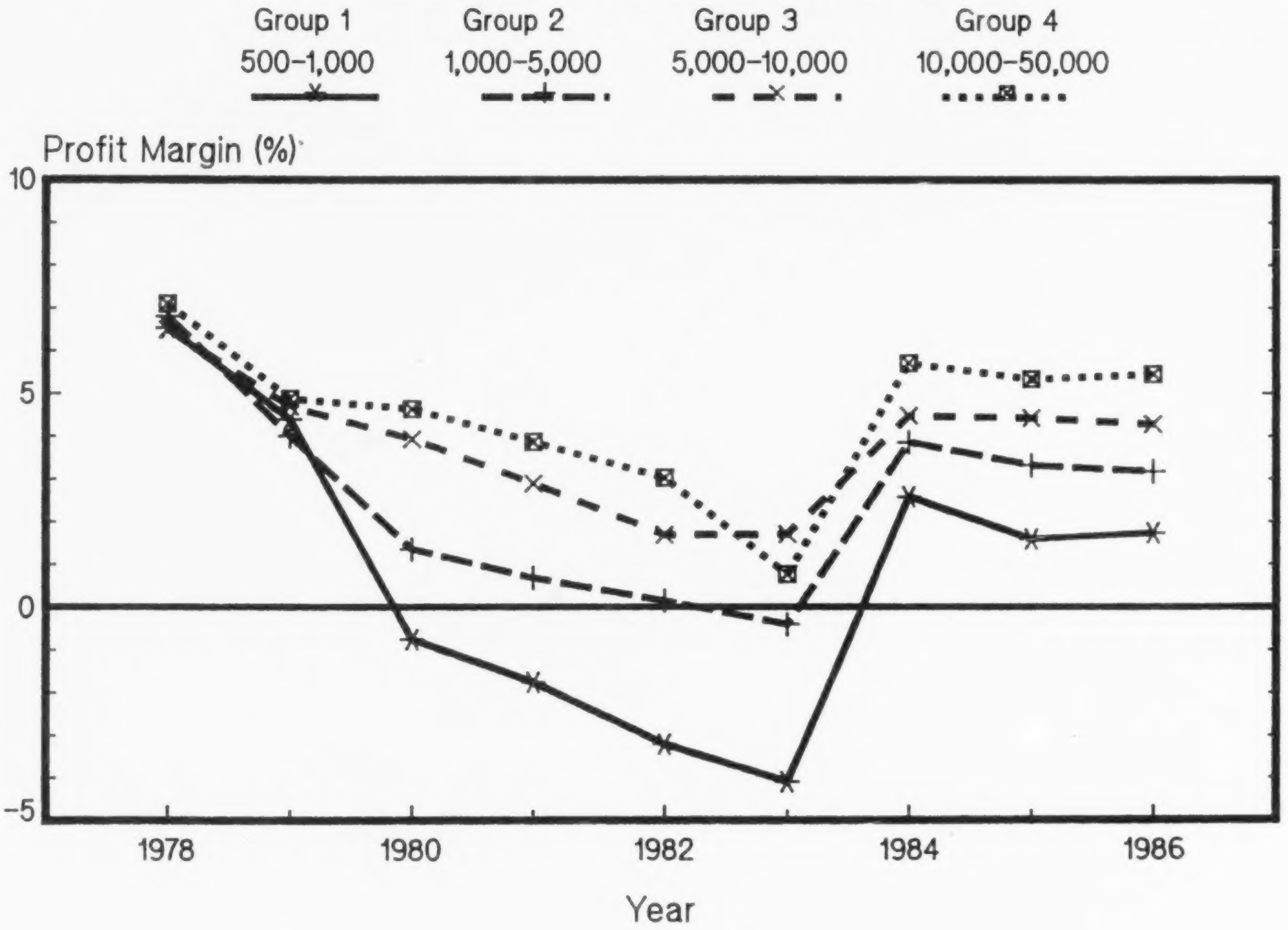


Figure 2

Profit Margins for Active Corporations in Four Size Groups



Endnotes

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27. Two general measures of profitability have been used in the literature, the rate of return on capital and profit as a percentage of sales revenue. The latter is used because no data on value of assets for these firms were available. In addition, profit can be calculated by various methods. Calculations of profit usually differ according to whether depreciation, interest paid, and taxes are subtracted from profit. Before tax profit with depreciation is used here. A discussion of profitability measures and their advantage and disadvantages can be found in F. M. Scherer and David Ross, Industrial Market Structure and Economic Performance, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1990, p 415-428.

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31. Because CU and INF are highly correlated with the other variables that also measure real economic activity and inflation, the results will be similar no matter which variable is used.

32. Several assumptions about the nature of the error term and the function form of the hypothesized relationship have been made. As in any linear regression analysis, the error terms are assumed to have zero mean, be indepen-

dent, and have constant variance. Diagnostics indicate that these are acceptable assumptions here. In addition, the authors tried several nonlinear function forms including logarithmic, quadratic and one that allowed the coefficients to vary according to the circulation size of the newspaper within a size group. Statistics indicated that the assumption of linearity was also acceptable.

33. Economic activity variables are included so that changes in the relative profit margins due to business cycle movement are not falsely attributing to the overall long-term changes in relative profitability.

34. Scherer and Ross, ibid. p.417.